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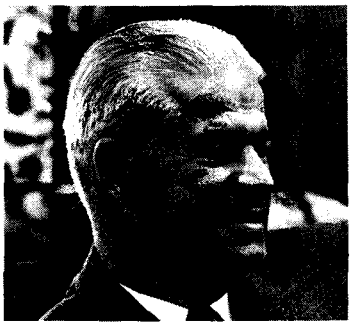

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If You Don't Mind My Saying So . . . . .

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

"Saucer's End." This is how *Time* Magazine captions its review of the recent Condon Report sponsored by the Air Force. But, of course, it really isn't the end by millions of words and many years. These saucers have already taken their place with the mystery of Atlantis, the secret of the pyramids, and the question of who wrote the works of Shakespeare. They will probably last longer than the Loch Ness monster or the abominable Snowman for the simple reason that futuristic machines have more appeal to the modern imagination than dubious animals from the past, no matter how monstrous or how abominable they may be. Perhaps it is just as well. Deprived of such harmless fantasies, many an enthusiast might fall victim to more dangerous obsessions.

But I do regret that certain other mysteries at least as intriguing do not get equal attention. What about mermaids, for instance—which happen to be great favorites of mine? The evidence for their existence is a good deal better than that for flying saucers, and it has accumulated over a much greater period of time.

We may grant that many of the eyewitness reports from the days of the Roman Empire down almost to the present moment may be dismissed, like many of the flying saucer reports, as simply false interpretations of ordinary phenomena. Probably some of the mermaids really were seals, porpoises or manatees, although a sailor who mistook any of these for a beautiful female must have been at sea for a very long time. We true believers are willing to grant even that the mermaids Columbus reported were something of that kind—especially since he confesses to having been disappointed to discover them less beautiful than earlier accounts had led him to expect. But just as there is said to be a hard core of inexplicable saucer reports, so there are a good many inexplicable accounts of mermaids by honest witnesses.

A full marshaling of the evidence would be quite as impressive as anything that could be compiled to demonstrate that we really are receiving visitors from outside our solar system, even though they must have come from a distance not less than the two light years that separate us from the nearest neighboring sun. In my limited space I can give only two of the many pieces of evidence. In Henry Hudson's log of his second voyage in search of the Northwest Passage, he records the testimony of two of his sailors:

> This morning, one of our company looking overboard saw a mermaid, and calling upon some of the company to see her, one more came up, and by that time she was come close to the ship's side, looking earnestly on the men; a little after, a sea came and overturned her: from the navel upward her back and breasts were like a woman's, her body as big as one of us; her skin very white; and long hair hanging down behind, of color black; in her going down they saw her tail, which was like the tail of a porpoise, and speckled like a mackerel. Their names that saw her were Thomas Hilles and Robert Raynar.

Skipping a few centuries and the mermaids reported from time to time, we might consider perhaps the most impressive of the several sightings made during the 1800's,

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namely, that reported by a respectable Scotch schoolmaster and published in the London *Times* for September 8, 1809:

> About twelve years ago . . . my attention was arrested by the appearance of a figure resembling an unclothed human female, sitting upon a rock extending into the sea, and apparently in the action of combing her hair, which flowed around her shoulders, and was of a light brown color. The forehead was round, the face plump, the cheeks ruddy, the eyes blue, the mouth and lips of a natural form, resembling those of a man; the teeth I could not discover, as the mouth was shut; the breasts and abdomen, the arms and fingers of the size of a full grown body of the human species; the fingers, from the action in which the hands were employed, did not appear to be webbed, but as to this, I am not positive. It remained on the rock three or four minutes after I observed it, and was exercised during that period in combing its hair, which was long and thick, and of which it appeared proud, and then dropped into the sea, from whence it did not reappear. I had a distinct view of its features, being at no great distance on an eminence above the rock on which it was sitting, and the sun brightly shining.

To the objection that these witnesses only saw what they had expected to see, the obvious reply is that the same objections can be raised to those who testify to flying saucers. From pictures we know what a flying saucer and even a spaceman would look like quite as well as sailors and schoolmasters knew what a mermaid would look like.

Two of the still unsettled questions are the same as those raised by vehicles manned by our extraterrestial visitors. The first concerns physical shape. I do not know who first assumed that spaceships were saucer shaped, and if you accept all the alleged sightings they aren't always that, although by now they usually are. In classical Greece mermaids were half bird and half woman and didn't begin to acquire fish tails until Hellenistic times as may be seen in late Greek sculpture as well as over the portal of the temple built by Hadrian at Ephesus. To this day there are no words in French to distinguish the two kinds except *"Sirène-oiseau"* and *"Sirène-poisson."*

But the question what a U.F.O. or a mermaid looks like is not really germane to the question whether or not they exist. A more important remaining dubiety about both is: are they friends or enemies? So far as I remember there is no record of an earthling being attacked by the navigators of the saucers and in the most convincing firsthand reports of mermaids they seem quite timid. But in folklore they sometimes lure sailors to destruction and sometimes, on the other hand, make obliging mistresses and even faithful wives.

Like those who protest vigorously against the Condon Report, I insist that the mermaid question hasn't really been settled, and I make a proposition. I will believe in flying saucers if those who refuse to give them up will believe in mermaids. And the least that can be said for the latter is that they have more sex appeal.

If I may change the subject (and who is to prevent me), I would like to say something about the science of etymology which has come a long ways since the days of Isidor of Seville and the medieval bestiaries. Learned men knew then that a lamb is called *"agnus"* because its mother is able to recognize it (*agnoscat*); that because bees are born without legs they are called *"apes"* or *"a-pedibus"*; and that "Adam gave the name to camels with good reason, for when they are being loaded up they kneel down and make themselves lower or humbler—and the Greek for low or humble is *cam.*" Today's dictionary makers too often exasperate seekers after knowledge by taking cowardly refuge in the note "etym. dub.," but really scientific etymology is newer even than scientific geology. Thoreau can solemnly assure us that "wild" means "willed" or "willful," and when I was an undergraduate we learned that "sincere" meant "without wax" because furniture makers sometimes disguised bad workmanship with wax.

Today it behooves those of us who like to know where a word really does come from to keep up with the science. Hence, I welcomed eagerly Oxford's new *Dictionary of English Etymology,* which presum-

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ably represents the last word on words and instead of resting content with the nearest Latin or Greek source really does "chase a panting syllable through time and space," following it back to the remotest times through a variety of languages.

Because I don't like to have picturesque derivations taken away from me, I am happy to report that, for instance, witch hazel still has nothing to do with witches, and that a nightmare is not any sort of female horse. Since hangnails seem to have been omitted, I shall go on believing that it is not a nail that hangs, but one that has become the occasion of *angst*—as in angina and the existentialist theology. I might add that also omitted from all the dictionaries I first consulted is leotard, which, as I finally ascertained, gets its name from that of one Jules Leotard, a nineteenth-century French aerial gymnast. This confers upon him the same sort of immortality as is enjoyed by Lord Chesterfield (twice, because of the coat and the couch), General von Blücher, General Burnsides, and, in French, the Messrs. Silhouette, Guillotin, Poubelle, and the Roman emperor Vespasian.

Changes in meanings are another subject of learned inquiry in the New Oxford, and some of them are so radical as to inspire me to compose a sort of riddle. The following nonsense statement becomes perfectly sensible if you will substitute for each noun a word that has today the meaning formerly borne by the word used here. Please take a deep breath and remember that neither I nor you has lost his mind. "Because I was suffering from small stones my fireman took me to a cape where, after uttering some beads, I departed with my lemon peel restored."*

The third and last topic of this anthology can be led into easily by reference to another problem created by words, namely, by the fact that a foreign word that looks and sounds like an English one may have an entirely different meaning and be responsible for such embarrassing *gaffes* as that made by a French visitor who replied to a question by saying that the thing which impressed him most in the United States was the ladies' toilettes—which originally was, and in French still is, a diminutive of *toile* (fabric) and hence means "costumes" rather than being an English euphemism which is no longer euphemistic. The English rather than the French meaning constitutes my transition since I want to say something about the present burst of interest in contemporary graffiti.

When I was a graduate student, there was a rumor that a German Ph.D. thesis dealt with "Inscriptions on Toilet Walls," but I never saw it. Recently, however, Mr. Robert Reisner has attracted the attention of the press by giving a course on precisely that subject and by leading his class (nine ladies and a Catholic priest) on field trips about the New York metropolitan area. He has attracted even the attention of M. Servan-Schreiber's weekly *L'Express,* which, as might be expected, is more literary and philosophical than an American newspaper. To begin with, the French comment quotes Baudelaire: "Sex and politics; the whole of human nature is on toilet walls." And I find its most striking examination in depth to be the following:

> Graffiti appear in all countries and at all times. On the walls of Pompeii for example you will find striking appeals to eroticism, which was also the number one subject up to 1945. But the explosive postwar change in manners introduced the obscene word into popular language. Céline and Henry Miller among other writers have, as it were, vulgarized vulgarity, thereby destroying its power to exorcise. Hence, the style of clandestine graffiti felt the effects.

It is pleasant to consider the possibility that future historians of literature may sum up the chief claims to fame achieved by some of our most distinguished contemporary writers by saying: "They were responsible for the purification of our toilet walls." Mr. Reisner is certainly correct in his observation that the toilet-wall graffiti (like the moralizing lapel buttons of the

* Those who are accustomed to looking up answers in the back of the book should consult the entries in an etymological dictionary under the following words: Scruple, Chauffeur, Chapel, Prayers and Zest.

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hippies) are nowadays more likely to be political or reflective than priapic, as, to give a single example, in "Sacred cows make the best hamburgers."

So far as I know, neither Mr. Reisner nor the author of the French disquisition has remarked that Rowan and Martin, joint M.C.'s of the top-ranking TV show, have introduced a new surface for the reception of graffiti, namely, the nude bodies of young ladies attractive enough to make even political slogans agreeably erotic. It is said (although I take this on hearsay only) that graffiti are rarely found in ladies' "powder rooms." Can there be any connection between this and the fact that, with the exception of the priest, all of Mr. Reisner's students are female?

In any case, graffiti have begun to come out of the toilets to establish themselves as a literary genre, and we now have what I suppose should be called art-graffiti acknowledged by their authors, as well as folk-graffiti. Many have a distinctly surrealist or dadaistic flavor. Others express the quintessence of disillusion as in the following prizewinners in a contest sponsored by T.W.A.: Picasso paints by numbers. Snoopy has fleas. Jim Beam drinks root beer. Drive defensively, buy a tank. Earn cash in your spare time—blackmail your friends.

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The Search for Alternative Models in Education

DAVID RIESMAN

As I EXPLAINED to my student hosts when invited to talk at this conference, educational reform depends on the local landscape, the local resources that student and faculty presently bring with them; indeed, change must be incremental and must build on what is already available. I know too little about Stanford to speak sensibly to the proposals made by its current self-scrutiny. Instead, I would like to suggest several alternative models that might be considered by one or another of the elite undergraduate colleges whose students are relatively free of immediate vocational pressures.

Such colleges have long had programs of general education, either directly under that label or at least as systems of distribution, limiting the ability of students to specialize and take all their courses in a particular field, and usually requiring some exposure to the humanities, the social sciences, the natural sciences—sometimes also the performing arts. Many programs have the aim of introducing freshmen and sophomores to areas in the arts and sciences only marginally or not at all available in the secondary schools, thus opening wider options for upper division majors. More ambitiously, they compel students to expose themselves to fields that they might prefer to avoid: either to achieve a more rounded education or to provide a grounding in a common heritage. In residential colleges there is the added hope that since

✪ DAVID RIESMAN gave this talk to a Stanford conference on undergraduate education growing out of the Study of Education at Stanford, a faculty-student study with proposals for reform. Mr. Riesman is Henry Ford II Professor of Social Science at Harvard, now on leave at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. With Joseph Gusfield and Zelda Gamson, he is completing a book, *Faculty Cultures and Popular Education,* to be published by Doubleday this fall.

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students are sharing a common program, they will discuss it outside of class also, allowing their studies to become a part of their intellectual life, and their conversation to be something in addition to the common denominators of current noncurricular pursuits. These programs with their quite ambitious purposes are today under pressure both from faculty and students in many good colleges.

Faculty members often do not want to teach large introductory courses, but to do their own specialized thing; few want captive audiences. Student claustrophobia makes any curricular requirement seem an unwarranted intrusion on the student's academic freedom to do his own thing.

Indeed, many students come to college already reasonably accomplished in one or another area of such a program, additional doses of which they then reject as surplusage. Others come into the program grudgingly, determined to get through it as best they may, without really exposing themselves to areas where they feel weak or bored. Student boredom is a powerful weapon, forcing the instructor either to threats, concerning, say, passing the course, or to ever greater efforts to entertain and draw out the students, or a mixture of both—with the students as the cash customers, judging the performance.

Furthermore, if, as in most large colleges and universities, students are given various ways to meet the general education or distribution requirements, this will frequently mean an effort to meet them on a minimal level. Thus, a student with an interest in literature who is hostile to science may cast around for that introductory science course—is it astronomy this year, or geology?—that is least taxing and least threatening. Or a prospective engineer will look for a "gut" humanities course where the professor is said to put on a good show.

Such a program does provide for the faculty a kind of division of labor and a treaty of competitive coexistence among different departments and areas. It operates on the assumption that, in choosing a natural science, a social science, and a humanities course, an undergraduate will correspondingly be introduced to different ways of thought and different modes of inquiry (a theme

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of Daniel Bell's *The Reforming of General Education*). But if one looks more analytically at the cognitive and emotional styles to be found in a university, it then may become evident that even if the students take distribution requirements seriously, they may still go through their four years of college with limited exposure to the variety of styles that exist in the world and from which they as individuals could profit.

In a more ideal university, which still wanted to adhere to this pattern, an assessment might be made, at entrance, of each student's preparation and style in the cognitive fields and performing areas to which the university might in principle introduce him. He would then be given as it were a ticket for the nutritional fare he needs in order to recoup vitamin deficiencies based on his earlier experience and indeed on his personal temperament, taking into account the allergies developed in his previous education as well as the appetites. The college that comes closest to the model I have in mind here is Sarah Lawrence, where there are virtually no curricular requirements, but where the adviser or don carefully counsels a student in imaginative ways, opening new possibilities, suggesting paths through the available courses (the normal load is three courses), where she can be persuaded although not compelled into abandoning self-protectiveness in exploring the curriculum.

It is a difficult task to carry the Sarah Lawrence idea further and to investigate how many distinct styles of knowing and feeling might make a manageable roster for undergraduates and faculty to work toward in any particular college. I can only illustrate the kind of thing I have in mind. One way of knowing would involve the performing arts, and the development of physical grace and sensitivity (which might also be cultivated in new ways in the physical education program); another form would involve mastering huge masses of narrative information, as in the traditional history course; still another would be conceptual and abstract, exemplified by mathematics or philosophy or some kinds of physics or economics. Still another style would involve field work, both observing people and interviewing or otherwise coping with them as individuals. Laboratory work might involve still another style,

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or several styles. Entering students would be assessed against this background of knowledge of the range of human capacities, to see in which of these they had already made a beginning, and in which they had been blocked or had no experience. They would be encouraged to play from strength in areas where they had made a start—perhaps this would already have led them into a preprofessional area. But they would also be encouraged into areas they had previously feared and avoided. Here, if they wished, they would not be graded, so that they could not plead that it would spoil their records if they did badly, but only that it would perhaps dent their showmanship or self-esteem. The chances are that they would not be in a selective university if they had not already learned to play from strength and to cover over or avoid altogether areas of weakness. It is precisely this self-definition that could be challenged in college—which is perhaps for most people the last chance to challenge it—their last chance for exploration into new territory. Students would have the opportunity to learn that they can enjoy doing something badly—not sloppily, but in fact as well as they can, even though this is not as well as others can perform. The purpose of this is not so much to establish a greater equality, because most of us will discover some area in which we are not adept and in which others are superior; it is not to pull people down and make them humble; but rather it is to reduce the narcissism or defensiveness that leads us to show, so to speak, only our good cognitive profile.

Students differ tremendously in the kinds of self-confidence and the awareness of deficiencies with which they have come to college. Institutions are changing very rapidly in the qualities they accept or reward among their students and in the breadth or narrowness of the spectrum of qualities they value. When Harvard College adopted a modified pass-fail system, I thought that this might encourage some Harvard and Radcliffe students to venture into mathematics or science, but an informal survey showed that many more students would venture into music and fine arts courses, which they had hesitated to take without the cultivated background they attributed to other students in these fields. Just as a person who has learned a second language can more easily

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learn a third, so a student who has discovered that he can manage in an area that previously seemed forbidding may have learned that he can afford to take certain risks in exposing possible deficiencies.

Student life is short; faculty resources are scarce; to overcome student self-protectiveness is a terribly ambitious enterprise, which can only be adumbrated even in the best institutions. Such a program does involve giving a very high priority to the advising function even if this means a lower priority for course work and other forms of teaching. It also means arranging student programs with the student's own cooperation so as to time potentially upsetting experience in new or threatening fields in such a way as not to put the student in a situation of all around humiliation at any one time. He would always be working in at least one field in which he did well, or possibly in fields linked to a potential occupational future. One advantage gained by conceiving of college education in this way is to permit doing more for those academically outstanding students who can get A's while still working at half-speed, protecting themselves readily in all areas of competition they have mastered.

Because the effort would be made to bring students in touch with a variety of cognitive styles, the division of faculty labor in a curriculum would have to be approached in novel ways. Thus it might turn out that a conceptual style could be met by work in theoretical physics, in economics, in general psychology, and in some philosophy courses—all these would be substitutes for one another, even though they would span the three divisions of most general education programs. There would no longer be the same protective tariff as between academic divisions. And then it might turn out that certain cognitive styles were dreadfully undernourished on the campus, and they would have a claim on resources even while the sociologists were looking for someone in urban studies, the anthropologists for an Africanist, the department of English for a successor to the retired Shakespeare scholar. Correspondingly, courses that students wanted to take might not be taught, although flexibility would permit students in off-campus terms to go to another university where such courses were being

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offered, provided that such a program was compatible with the balance between adequacy and surefootedness on the one side and learning how to learn in new and anxiety-provoking areas on the other.

Sacrificed in such a program would be some of the commonality that is a virtue of the required curricula at Shimer, in Hutchins' great program at the College at Chicago, at Monteith College of Wayne State University, or the two St. John's Colleges at Annapolis and Santa Fe. There would be of course some limited commonality in the experiences already described, since while each student's path through the institution would be separately designated, many would be following at least similar paths. Furthermore, in an era when many young people reject history as bunk or as a set of cautionary tales told by overanxious adults, it is all the more essential to require students to study some period of history in concrete and full detail. As Daniel Bell observes in the book mentioned earlier, an emphasis on diverse modes of knowing could encourage some students with already large talents at subsumesmanship, if the program did not also include immersion in specific content. In addition, one might plan for seasons of commonality outside the course structure. Thus the language requirement, perpetual hurdle for some tone-deaf Americans, would be dealt with by a language term or quarter in which everything would be happening in the designated foreign language as in a Peace Corps immersion program, so that the student would have to swear or chat or gripe in the language, and endure it along with his fellows until he had attained a certain proficiency—a program whether at home or abroad that would make use of native informants and all the devices of modern language training, and an immersion in the culture of the country involved, perhaps including the popular culture.

There might also be experimentation, such as many institutions now are making, with interim periods in which regular classes would stop and lectures and discussions would focus on a single topic of interest to a significantly large proportion of students and faculty. Such an event would not necessarily be an annual occurrence, but should depend on the concatenation of

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interests among faculty and students on a particular campus—interests that might or might not be synchronous with nationwide preoccupations with race or individualism or war. One of the problems in such synchronous efforts is to avoid creating a too charismatic accent on stir and excitement with negative effects on workmanlike diurnal tasks.

Residential units on such a campus could become *ad hoc* groupings of students and faculty sharing mutual academic and extracurricular interests. For example, a congenial group of faculty from several different but compatible fields could take on fifty or a hundred second-year students who would be committed to pursuing these interests for the next three years. This group would constitute an *ad hoc* subcollege, with a claim on dormitory and other resources and a commitment to meet one or another of the demands for exposure to various cognitive styles. It might be a preprofessional group of students who might be interested in careers in the law, concerned for instance with the ecology of risks and how these are spread (or concentrated), including such matters as the rise of insurance, comparative systems of accident litigation, the development of social security, and the relative emphases on cure or redress as against prevention in coping with hazards. On the faculty side, such a program might include lawyers specializing in trial practice, in insurance, in welfare law; economists, demographers and statisticians; sociologists with an interest in the study of gambling, and anthropologists with an interest in magic and folk religion. Such a group would not necessarily bring its students to a professional or career threshold; its aim would be the general education and cognitive awakening of people who might go on in a variety of fields. After a particular group of second-year students, however, had been carried through to the baccalaureate, it would be a normal expectation that the faculty members would disband, dissolving back into the general faculty, and presumably entitled, after a pioneering pedagogic effort, to a sabbatical as a time for restoring visibility in one's discipline and currency in one's specialty. Or, to give another example, one might conceive of a three-year program on multi-ethnic societies, which could take advantage of the presence on the campus of an anthropologist who

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had worked in Indonesia, a theologian who had studied at Louvain, an ethnomusicologist with an interest in jazz, a sociolinguist with an interest in dialect, and so on. Again, this group would not be institutionalized permanently, but would have a short-run obligation subject in special instances to renewal for a term of years.

The intellectual and human problems of creating a single, genuinely new course even within a discipline, let alone among disciplines, is frequently underestimated by faculty as well as by students. For example, one discovers administrators, students and faculty talking about urban studies programs all over the country today. Yet in few places has there been success in bridging properly supervised work in the field with the relevant academic disciplines; those who are capable of such supervision are rare, and it is exhausting work. While with faculty as with students, efforts are important to encourage widening of horizons and redemption of earlier blockages, it is also essential to protect faculty even against their own willingness to become totally devoted to teaching. This is especially true at the present time in those colleges where students have become omnivorous, while many faculty feel ambivalent about the value of painstaking work along traditional paradigms. The wholly student-oriented instructor should be discouraged, for I do not think it is generally helpful for students to be faced with mentors who have no other constituency or major concern, who may then become overdependent on a student audience and on the generosity of an institution toward which they have been overly generous. A large business can find room for emotionally or intellectually exhausted executives in the warehouse division or can buy out their contracts; but there are not many niches for worn-out faculty—perhaps some make-work administrative jobs—but the administration has no power to force a man anywhere, even upstairs, if he has tenure.

It takes strong and sensitive, relatively unfettered administrators to sponsor faculty members who are exploring styles of teaching and curricular ventures that may in the locale not work out. The focus must always be on the people who are there or who could be brought there, not on national norms about supposed compatibilities, for example between sociologists and political sci-

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entists, or anthropologists and psychologists. For example, a particular college might avoid plunging into American Studies, but a three-year advantage might be taken of the availability of an architect with an interest not only in the aesthetics of American design but in the mechanics of American building—especially such "ordinary" building as suburban tract homes, gas stations, movie palaces, banks, schools and colleges. Depending on personal friendships (which such programs of course might sometimes disrupt!), such an architect might team up with an historian specializing in nineteenth-century America, an aesthetician in the philosophy department with an interest in film, a structural engineer, and a sculptor.

I have sought to make clear that I am talking about colleges where most students see their undergraduate years as not wholly determined by their vocational destiny, where most are students who would not reject exploratory courses and programs as "cultural bull," an obstacle put in their way by idealistic professors who should let them get along to their degree and a better job. Conversely, however, the very tendency of many of the ablest, usually affluent students to reject and disparage the whole idea of a conventional career or a vocation creates new problems for the liberal arts college as to how to respond to the student demand for relevance. For some students who are in college principally because of the draft or because the institution provides a political base, or because they seek a moratorium from work of any sort, the demand for relevance provides arguments for destroying any structured curriculum and for asking the faculty to relieve the students' boredom by catering to their insistence on excitement, on happenings. For such students, the academic man is no longer the attractive or seductive model that he was for undergraduates in a good college even two or three years ago when it was common opinion that the life of business or of government or of any large organizational world was corrupt, while the nonprofit life of the professor or the scientist was at least in principle redeemable. Today many students of the sort I am describing regard *all* adult professions as almost equally corrupt, some perhaps more and some less hypocritical; and if this view is a gain in the loss of an

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older and unjustified snobbery vis-à-vis business and government, it is a loss in the growth of an undiscriminating nihilism.

It has seemed to me important to make possible the discovery by undergraduates of styles of adult life that they might find exhilarating both inside and outside the academic professions. For, of course, in a good college the faculty member is often a professional, who sees himself as encouraging knowledge "for its own sake," yet in fact is introducing students not only to English or to sociology, but to the possibilities of making a living as a teacher of English or of sociology. Professionalism, however, has a somewhat low and vulgar sound to many liberal arts professors as well as to many students who do not want to commit themselves to any sort of professional career, which they interpret as preparing themselves for an occupational slot in somebody else's organizational society. Such undergraduates are apt to believe, as I have already noted, that they should be entirely free from requirements so that each can do his own thing. Yet "his own thing" is often not actually so much his own as the fashion of his age-grade and is thus provincial in time and place, no matter how international or cosmopolitan the student may be in his musical, political, or general cultural tastes.

Hence, in the ideal curriculum I am delineating, experimentation with undergraduate professional training in such fields as medicine and law seems worth exploring. Only recently an undergraduate teacher in microbiology would have been inclined to feel that a student who goes on to medical school is almost as much of a loss to science as a student in economics who goes on to run his father's small jewelry shop. Professors of political science or history have tended to feel this way about someone who goes on to law school rather than on to graduate work in the social sciences. Yet perhaps today faculty members should take seriously any effort to introduce professionalism even if it looks retrograde vis-à-vis the earlier rejection of undergraduate low-level vocationalism. In the State University of New York at Buffalo, President Martin Meyerson has sought to move tentatively in this direction by linking each graduate professional school to the relevant area in the arts and science faculties in residential and admin-

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istrative terms, if not as yet in curricular ones. Harris Wofford, the president of the new college at Old Westbury in the State University of New York, hoped to build undergraduate programs in medicine, law, and perhaps theology into the curriculum. In plans for the college, which opened with an experimental charter class last fall, he proposed beginning a medical "major" in the freshman year of college, taught by medical school faculty members. One might, for example, develop a course in epidemiology that would also touch on problems of health care, preventive medicine, and the social psychology of the medical team. Preparation for such a course would require that the student learn statistics and other essential skills that would become relevant by being ancillary to a potential professional future. Similarly, students interested in urban affairs could begin a sequence in law. Wofford hoped that these subjects could be taught undergraduates not primarily to introduce them to possible careers but rather as part of their general education. A graduate of the College at the University of Chicago and much influenced by St. John's College, Harris Wofford insists that Plato is a contemporary writer. The curriculum he has aimed for would be tied to the great books of the academic past as well as to contemporary field work and potential professional futures.

But, according to report, neither of these emphases has been acceptable to the first small group of undergraduates at Old Westbury. Both great books and great professions seem to them somehow medieval. (I should add that I was opposed on practical grounds at first to the idea of undergraduate curricula in law and medicine, fearing, for example, that the easy omnicompetence of many law professors would hide the difficulty of creating new programs for as yet uncommitted undergraduates; I also know how difficult it is for professional men, not educators, to find appropriate levels for introducing their subjects without extensive lead-times for preparation.) Some of these students have apparently taken Erik Erikson's idea of a moratorium for personal search and extrapolated it into the indefinite future.* Partly this reflects their

* See Michael Novak, "Experiment at Old Westbury: Trying to Talk," *Commonweal*, January 31, 1969, pp. 560-563.

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own commitment to the liberal arts ideal in its modern existential version rather than in its earlier version of training for a gentlemanly life. Many of these students have a very aristocratic attitude toward what they consider merely middle-class accomplishments. To their hauteur, many faculty members will respond by letting the students dictate the program, trusting that they will learn something in pursuing their own bent.

Undoubtedly, some students will succeed in resisting all adult expectations, distrusting as an enemy anyone who wants to help them and who does not accept their own educational ideals. I have no illusions about the difficulties of a curriculum based on styles of learning, on substantive history and language, and on professional models that I have here only very roughly sketched.

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Beethoven New-Born

EDWARD T. CONE

ANNOUNCER. We have now arrived at the intermission of this afternoon's concert. As you know, it is our custom to interview at this time some notable figure of the musical world, and we are very happy to be able to present to you today the man who will be conducting the orchestra next week: Herr Tauber Beugenohren. Next Sunday's performance will be Herr Beugenohren's first appearance on the American podium, but his reputation has long preceded him. His new interpretations of the classics, especially of the symphonies of Beethoven, have brought him worldwide renown, even though he has hitherto restricted his performances to his native Germany. These performances have invariably engendered great enthusiasm among those fortunate enough to attend them, while at the same time provoking vigorous, even heated, critical discussion. Herr Beugenohren has been hailed as the most exciting musical figure to appear in Germany since Richard Wagner, and his renditions have been compared by some to religious revelations. There have also been, it must be confessed, less laudatory evaluations; but all agree that Herr Beugenohren, despite all controversy—and perhaps partly because of it—remains one of the most important figures in the musical world today. We shall therefore be proud to present him as our guest conductor next week, and we are proud to introduce him to you today as our intermission guest.

Herr Beugenohren, I notice that you are devoting the entire concert next week to one work, Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*. Granted that the symphony is a long one, doesn't that still make a rather short program?

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BEUGENOHREN. Ah, I see you do not understand my methods. I present always only one work on a program. This is in order that we may spend all the time before the intermission in a so-to-speak public rehearsal.

A. Public rehearsal?

B. Yes. This is necessary in order to establish rapport among what I gladly call the three apices of the musical triangle: between conductor and orchestra, between orchestra and audience, and between audience and conductor. But it is not a formal rehearsal, oh no! So that we may get to know one another as intimately as possible, the players (and next week, of course, the singers, too) rehearse their parts while strolling among the audience. At the same time we invite the so-desirous members of the audience to come and stroll upon the stage, where they can introduce themselves to such players as the cellists, for whom it would be inconvenient to practice while strolling. I myself stroll and talk to as many of my listeners as I can, so that I may have some idea of their preconceptions, their prejudices, their *Weltanschauung*, as it were. Obviously, such *Zusammenheit* greatly increases our *Gemütlichkeit*. The members of the audience feel that they know us, and we feel that we know them. When we play, we give of our best, for we are playing now for our friends. And our friends in turn listen sympathetically; for now—such is our hope—they love us, and they love the work we are performing, a work that they have come to know during our stroll together. Now they can greet not only each member of the orchestra (often, indeed, by name), but also each cantilena, each countermelody, each chord, with—dare I say it—true affection.

A. I think I see. The audience will now be ready to follow the symphony more intelligently, with a clearer understanding.

B. No, no! Not *understanding!* You are influenced by what can only be your academic preconceptions. (Forgive me, but I must speak truth.) Never *understanding,* but *experience,* is what we strive for. As I have so often to say to my German colleagues, whose brains, like your own, are academically washed, *Verstand, nein! Erlebnis, ja!* Understanding comes from the brain, from the intellect; it is cold. Experience comes from the heart, from the soul; it is

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warm. Of what value is it to understand what one does not love? And how can one love what one does not to the fullest degree experience? We wish to engage the emotions, not the intellect. We seek what we Germans call so expressively a *Gefühlsverbindlichkeitserlebnis.*

A. I begin to understand—or perhaps I should say, I begin to experience. And I begin to see, too, why your renditions are constantly interrupted by audience participation. From what I have read, these interruptions constitute a noteworthy feature of your concerts.

B. Noteworthy, yes; interruptions, no. Ha, ha! Such participation is an integral part of our performance. But you are right in suggesting that it is the result of the *Gefühlsverbindlichkeitserlebnis.* Because our audience—no, now must I call them our friends —because our dear friends have heard the motifs, the phrases, the melodies, of the symphony, and have come to love this music during the rehearsal, they will now wish to express their affection by singing or humming or whistling during the actual performance, along with the orchestra. Of course, we expect special participation in the last movement of the *Ninth Symphony.* That so-familiar ode-tune will encourage even the shiest of our friends to open his heart in joy and his mouth in song!

A. I can hardly wait. But let's go back a bit, Herr Beugenohren. Although your name has been well known in musical circles for many years, it is only recently that it has been associated with the reinterpretations that have brought you so much public acclaim. Could you tell us something of how you arrived at your new point of view?

B. Of course. I have come to my present point of view by way of the contemporary theater, especially your theater here in the United States. For who in the contemporary theater would think of performing the classics as they were performed one hundred, fifty, even ten years ago? Who in the theater considers an ancient and in many respects out-of-date text to be so sacred that its every word, nay, its every punctuation mark, must be preserved? The classics speak to all time, true, but if they are to speak to our time, they must speak in our language. That is what the great men of

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the modern theater have realized, but that is what the musicians have been slow to understand. They still think of the classical scores as holy scriptures! So in my own way, I have sought to apply to music the discoveries of the so-vital theater directors of your country. On my last visit to the United States a year ago, I watched and studied closely productions of Shakespeare and Aeschylus and Euripides in New York, in New Haven—even, as you say, in the deep heartland of Texas—that moved me deeply. These were revelations indeed! Who could be present at such productions without the realization that he was hearing the true voices of these great spirits speaking at last in a language to which he could respond? For the first time in my life I was not merely watching the drama, I was experiencing it in my innermost being. It was for me a great *Gefühlsverbindlichkeitserlebnismöglichkeitsoffenbarung!*

Then on my return to Germany, I read a most profound book: *Beethoven unser Zeitgenosse,* by Johann Kinderbettchen.* Here was confirmation of my conviction that music, too, must be translated into the modern tongue. No, you must not call my performances interpretations or reinterpretations: they are translations. Beethoven is speaking in the language of today.

A. Haven't they made up a jingle about that in Germany?

B. *Ach ja!* It goes thus:

> "Durch meine Kunst," sagt Beugenohren,
> "Ist nun Beethoven neugeboren."†

You see, it is what we call a *Schüttelreim.* That is German, from *schütteln,* shake, *Reim,* rhyme: *Schüttelreim,* shake-rhyme. You shake up *Beugenohren* and you get *neugeboren.* You call it in English spoon-rhyme.

A. You mean spoonerism.

B. Yes, just so; spoon-rhyme. You stir the words with a spoon.

* For the American edition, *Beethoven, Our Contemporary,* the author's name has been anglicized to John Cot.

† Freely translated:

> Says Beugenohren: "Through my art
> Beats anew Beethoven's heart."

It is of course impossible to preserve the *Schüttelreim* in English.

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A. Isn't there another rhyme about you, beginning, *Es war ein tauber Musikant . . .* ?*

B. *Ach nein!* That one is based on a stupid pun—puns are so stupid, are they not?—as I say, on a stupid and mistaken pun on my first name, Tauber. You see, I was named for the great Viennese singer Richard Tauber. My parents were appassionate for the Viennese light opera and for Tauber's singing. It was only natural that they should name their firstborn son for their favorite.

A. I never heard Tauber in person, but I know his records well. But to return for a moment to your interest in the contemporary drama: in this country the New Theater, in some of its phases at least, seems to have certain associations with the political movement known as the New Left. Is this true of your new approach to music?

B. Left, Right—these are but catchwords. What is important is political style. But I do not deny to art the possibility of political implications. A new political style calls forth a new art form; a new artistic style may engender a new politics. Do we not hear now on every side that we are entering a period characterized by the Politics of Confrontation? Very well: what is the New Theater but the Theater of Confrontation? And that is what I strive to produce in music: a Music of Confrontation. Such a style is by no means restricted to those who may call themselves the Left! As a matter of fact, I myself—but I do not wish to speak of myself. For the politics, what is important is to realize the power of the new energies here available: to channel them, to guide them, to lead them—but stop, I carry myself away. As for the direction one may take—well, when the world is round, Left and Right often end up at the same place, *nicht wahr?*

But I digress. I am musician, not politician, and for me such speculation is but fantasy, the amusement of my idle hours.

A. Good! Then let's drop the subject. I understand that Schreckophon is about to issue your first phonograph record. Why did you choose the *Seventh Symphony* for it?

* It is possible that the transcript here is in error. *Ein tauber Musikant* seems to mean "a deaf musician." Perhaps what is intended is *Ein Tauber, Musikant, Tauber* meaning a male pigeon. In any case, the pun is quite untranslatable.

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B. Of course, you understand that the phonograph record is utterly foreign to my musical conception, which is based on the intimate cohabitation of the three apices of the musical triangle: conductor, players and auditors. That is why I have hitherto rejected all requests for enregistration. But at last am I persuaded. Have I the right to deny all corners of the earth the privilege of hearing the true Beethoven speak out loud and clear? So have the representatives of Schreckophon argued. Yielding to their plea, I have chosen the symphony that will most easily submit to enregistration without losing its total character. You ask me, Why the *Seventh?* I ask you in turn, What did Richard Wagner call the *Seventh?*

A. The Apotheosis of the Dance, wasn't it?

B. Precisely. And that is how I have conceived the newborn *Seventh*—as the Apotheosis of the Modern Dance, of the dance that so clearly expresses the soul of today's youth. And the bacchic frenzy of this orgiastic dithyramb is able to make itself clearly felt even across the mechanism of the disc and the turntable and the amplifier and the speaker: all, all, are united in the ecstasy of the new Ludwig-van-Beethoven Rock!

A. You mean you actually present a rock version of the *Seventh Symphony?*

B. Why not? Beethoven's beat is simple, monotonous, monomaniac: in a word, pure rock. In this symphony he is fundamental rock, the Bottom Rock! All I have had to do is to translate his orchestra into an electrically amplified rock-group, and the players themselves do the rest. In the second movement, for example—you remember it, no doubt, a series of variations on a simplest theme—in this movement my players outdo themselves in vying to improvise new variations. First one, then another, by twos, by threes, then all together—a veritable Rock Jam! Even on the disc the effect is electrifying (as well as electrical, ha, ha!)—although, of course, it lacks the wonder-beautiful psychedelic lightings newconceived for the in-flesh presentation. Nevertheless, you will find it unforgettable.

A. Indeed it must be. I shall be eager to hear the record. But now let's turn to the *Ninth Symphony,* which you will be perform-

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ing here next week. Does improvisation enter into this translation as well?

B. Improvisation plays a most important role in all my translations. How can the players feel love for a work that is dead? How can they make contact with it, experience it? And how can a work live if the living player cannot breathe into it the breath of creative life? The choral finale of the *Ninth*—what is it indeed but another series of variations, another monumental jam *Sitzung*? You will see what my inspired performers will do with it!

A. I look forward to it. What about the general musical idiom of the work? Do you use rock again here?

B. No. The *Ninth* is, may I say, more sophistic than the *Seventh*, less naïve. I therefore turn when appropriate to the more advanced musical idioms of our time. For example, do you remember that *entsetzlich* chord that Beethoven writes just before the entrance of the baritone solo?

A. You mean the one where he combines all the tones of the diatonic scale?

B. Just so. Now, what was Beethoven trying to do? He was trying to produce a most horrible effect, a chord most terrifying to his hearers. But how can we, today, produce a corresponding effect? Certainly no longer by the use of the mere diatonic scale!

A. Perhaps by combining all the tones of the chromatic scale?

B. Ah, but no! You again show yourself too old-fashioned. (Forgive me, but I must speak truth.) That might have been Wagner's way, Strauss's way, but not the way of today, when every possible combination has been squeezed out of the defenseless chromatic scale by those *Zwölftonkulturbolschewisten*—

A. Those who?

B. I beg your pardon—by the so-highly-dissonant music of the new-Viennese school. No. What is left today but to fall back upon white noise itself, that all-embracing nature-sound of the sea, of the waterfall, of the dancing atoms themselves? Yes, I have dared to use a recorded tape of an electronically produced white noise. It is most horrendous.

A. I am sure it is.

B. Another example of my method: you will recall the march

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variation with its so-called Turkish instrumentation—bass drum, triangle, cymbals. In Beethoven's day Turkish music was considered highly exotic, but not so now. We have been conditioned by too many Turkish marches of Mozart, of Beethoven himself, and so wider. And what indeed is exotic about the westernized Turkey of today? No, no—here we must translate. We must look for analogy. We must search much further afield to find exoticism. So I have studied the music of central Africa, of aboriginal Australia, of hidden Tibet, and I have concluded that the contemporary equivalent of Beethoven's Turkish instrumentation is—would you like to guess?

A. I have no idea.

B. The steel band of the West Indies!

A. Of course, how stupid of me.

B. Another decade, of course, and we shall have to use something else. Perhaps the orchestra of Mars, ha, ha!

A. Tell me, Herr Beugenohren, is it true, as I have heard it said, that sometimes you even include the music of composers other than Beethoven in your versions? Aren't you afraid to mix styles in that way?

B. I am afraid of nothing that the situation demands. You will have gathered that one of my cardinal principles is what my mentor Kinderbettchen calls *Zeitgemässheit*, up-to-dateness. At every point one must stop and think, What did Beethoven mean by this? How did it affect his contemporaries? How will it affect us today? How can we create for ourselves an effect analogous to that which Beethoven intended? Obviously Beethoven's own methods, slavishly followed, will not produce similar results today. Therefore I must rethink his music anew at every point. I have shown you this process at work in my choice of white noise and steel band. Now you ask me about using the music of other composers. Good, I will show you such a case. There is a famous passage in the Finale of the *Ninth Symphony* where Beethoven calls up the themes of the preceding movements and marshals them in review, as if to choose one. But he rejects each in turn, finding the proper musical material only in his great ode-tune. That was a startling moment for his contemporary audience, you may be sure! What composer had

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dared do such a thing before—recall his earlier themes and dismiss them one by one? But today that is—what do you call it?—an old hat. Franck has done it, Bruckner has done it. I must therefore give this spot special study. I must ask myself, What will create the analogous effect today? How can I give to this important passage the *Zeitgemässheit* it deserves?

A. And what did you come up with?

B. But have you not guessed? Surely if Beethoven's great melody has significance today, that is because it stands erect as a perpetual finger of accusation against the degenerate practices of our time, against the *Zwölftonkulturbolsche*—I beg your pardon—I mean, against the over-intellectualistic style and techniques of the new-Viennese school, to which even such talents as those of Stravinsky and Hans Werner Henze have on occasion made obeisance, but to which Beethoven, were he alive today, would never, never bow! Clearly, then, instead of Beethoven's own themes, it is most highly appropriate here to interpolate themes—if one can apply the term to such amorphous, unmelodic tone-successions—of Schönberg, Berg and Webern. Then turning Berg's own parodistic methods against him and his brethren, what do you suppose that I do?

A. I have no idea.

B. Aha! Into the recitative of the cellos and double-basses, which is already so eloquent as to verge on human speech—into this recitative I insert the melody of Bach's famous chorale, the same chorale that Berg has impiously used in his Violin Concerto, *Es ist genug!* That means, "It is enough." Is it not clever? Indeed, it is most effective. You will see!

A. Do you think most of your audiences understand the reference?

B. We make sure of that during the rehearsal period. We spread the words!

A. Words—that reminds me. Do you alter Schiller's text at all?

B. Surely that is an unnecessary question. How could Schiller's ode, significant as it was for its own day, be meaningful now, just as it stands? Naturally, as always I change as little as possible, but certain substitutions—what I call analogical correspondences—are

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unavoidable. After all, this is, I must again remind you, the twentieth century—indeed, the last third of the twentieth century!

A. Can you give me a few examples of your analogical correspondences?

B. Most gladly. At the outset onset of the chorus in answer to the baritone recitative, I have them sing, "Sigmund! Sigmund!"

A. Oh, I see. This must be a reference to Wagner, who so greatly admired the *Ninth*, and felt that it justified what he himself was trying to do.

B. Not at all. Did I not tell you this was the twentieth century? Perhaps in 1890 our chorus might have sung, "Siegmund, Siegmund!" But not today. "Sigmund" is Sigmund Freud.

A. I get it now. Freud instead of *Freude?*

B. Precisely. It is a very subtle pun; and as Freud himself has pointed out, puns are revelatory of great wisdom. For who is the source of so much joy in the world today, of so much *Freude,* as Sigmund Freud, the prophet of the death wish? You will see how well it goes:

Freud, du schöner Götterfunken,
Doktor aus Elysium,
Wir betreten, reuetrunken,
Dein Laboratorium!
Du, der saub're, bindest wieder
Die Geschlechter, sonst geteilt;
Jedermann legt sich danieder
Wo dein sanftes Sofa weilt.*

Is it not in the highest sense illustrative of Schiller's magnanimous *Alle Menschen werden Brüder* (a phrase of which we have, I trust, kept the quickening spirit in our analogously correspondent paraphrase, even though we have not hesitated to alter the killing letter)—is it not, shall I say, symbolic that we should here be willing

*Freud, thou spark divine and rare,
Doctor sent from Paradise,
We, remorse-besotten, dare
Approach thine office for advice.
Thy cleansing spirit joins forever
Sex to sex, so long apart.
Every man will now endeavor
On thy couch to ease his heart.

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to celebrate a member of the despised—that is, of the once-despised —Jewish race?

A. No doubt, no doubt. What do you do about the passage referring to the existence of a Creator beyond the stars? I should suppose you would find that out of keeping with present-day thought.

B. Yes and no. We must appeal to all kinds of audiences, you know; we do not rule out members of any religion or of no religion from our musical triangle. So we sing two versions of those now-controversial lines, Schiller's original and one that is more psychoanalytically orthodox, alternating them as we go along. This is very easy to do in the fugue. Thus, if you listen carefully you will hear once:

Brüder! über'm Sternenzelt
Muss ein lieber Vater wohnen.*

And again:

Brüder! nur ein bisschen Geld
Braucht man um die Kur zu lohnen.†

You can accept either one, or both of them, as you prefer. Is it not full of *Zeitgemässheit?*

A. Yes, and I am sure that our radio audience will be hanging on every word next week. Is this to be your only appearance with an American orchestra?

B. Unfortunately so. I must return immediately to the Fatherland to supervise the building of our *Liebeszentrum* in Munich.

A. Your *Liebeszentrum?*

B. Yes, our Love-center.

A. It seems to me I have read only recently about something of the sort being built in Bonn, called an Eros-center, a sort of government-controlled broth—

B. Yes, ours too will be a brotherly-love center, but it will not be controlled by the government, certainly not by the present government. Nor will it be built in Bonn, but rather in Munich, rich in historical associations. You will appreciate that our highest-

*Brothers! far beyond the skies
Dwells our Father, that is sure.
†Brothers! Tiny is the size
Of the sum we pay for cure.

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special kind of performance demands a highest-special kind of auditorium—more than an auditorium in fact. That is why I have coined a new name for it, *Liebeszentrum*. It will be built by and for those who can receive our message and work for our wider aims.

A. Your aims are not exclusively musical then?

B. At the *Liebeszentrum* music will be only the first of many doorways to be opened for the free expression of love. We shall encourage the body as well as the soul with gymnastics, eurhythmics, the dance in all its forms—I grow excited at the forethought! There shall be new-born, not as now only Beethoven, but the German Folk itself, the Fatherland! Our *Gefühlsverbindlichkeitserlebnis* shall inspire the resuscitation, the recrudescence, the rejuvenescence, the renascence, of the German Reich! *Sieg Heil! Heil*—

A. Thank you very much, Herr Beugenohren. I regret that our time on the air has come to an end.

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Eight Young Poets . . . . . .

For the Assassins

RALPH ADAMO

You who have the courage of my impulse
to kill what I cannot be

a black Jesus
a white king
a father of eleven millionaires

you turn in my blood
like the snake

But you are paid
you are pawned
you are angered not forgivably mad

you kill me in my sleep
as I kill the lords
as my grandfather killed the sheep

hung upside down
and slit and bled
and eaten by men who watched

For you I smoke slow cigarettes
long past the time for bed
because I know you
you know me
because of what you have done

For you I pray
who make me not to kill

✪ RALPH ADAMO lives in New Orleans and studies at Loyola University, New Orleans. His poems have appeared in *Motive*, the *New Orleans Review*, *Shenandoah*, *Poem* and other magazines. Mr. Adamo is an associate editor of *Confluence*.

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Two Sonnets

Calvin Forbes

for the Greek girl in New York

I)
You've a past too multiple for me
To know you very well but today
I'll guess at your ancestral dark hair
How it can strangely lead a man
To a complex thought of Cyprus
Where lazy men dance and thin women
(Who look like you) calmly sew straw baskets
For eggs while ghosts protect their fortunate houses

Where running children collide and shake off pine cones
From a tree similar to one we burned
Accidentally (which could suggest our romance)
A tree known throughout your adopted land
And mine, for how easily the wood catches fire
As if to embarrass us by warming the pyre of our dead.

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for my Mother

II)
Pale as the familiar cream and tea, you
Float past history and into a cup; before
My birth, a time so unreal I imagine
Helen stealing your thoughts while you
Decide to climb down for the favors of my father.
He insisted that you charm the sheriff and harness
A mule for the right to a free and quick ride north
As one brother grew tired of lovers' quarrels.

Drowning now as tired dreams like hands
Lift the fallen gay parade, you drink to a mad
Life father led which left you always pregnant and poor.
Some sons went unborn; I was out on a second knot
Of promises, as your citadel burned on the northern water,
And my lonely father became a fabled and alien man.

✪ CALVIN FORBES writes: "For the last three years, I have spent most of my time traveling around the country, staying briefly wherever I found something. In the summer of 1968, I attended the Bread Loaf Writers' Conference. This fall I hope to begin work on a novel and return to my home in Newark where I was born in 1945."

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Farewells

ANN GOTTLIEB

You are careless
of light partings, saying how
the night makes restitution: if by day
we drop apart, and go
hurtling in two bright
parabolas, yet our fingers grow,
limbs weld and run
to one, in night's handfasting . . .

Not so: only think
we cling in what might well be grief,
and once the flesh has tolled
its *vale, vale,* take profoundest leave:
you lower yourself, hold by hold,
out of the world; your hands unfasten me
and I stand for a while, keeping the shell
of your body, till my hands, too, fall
and loose me like a stone into the last well.

✪ ANN GOTTLIEB grew up in Chicago and went to college in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She now lives in New York City, where she works as an assistant editor at Harcourt, Brace & World.

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Age of Business

MICHAEL HAYDN

this will be my last beer
the sun's out
the crowd's in
this is an age of business
it must be understood that images and
real concerns and much more
harbor on the spoken word
soon forgotten
today is big enough without tomorrow

✪ MICHAEL HAYDN is primarily interested in all kinds of music. He is now living in Boston and pursuing a career in popular music.

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From Fogged Barracks

STEFAN JOVANOVICH

from fogged barracks hutched white slugs
lying in a garden grey walls bend
against the morning blue stains of glass
stars spearing lights float up
nets of dawn fobs of yellow spangles
throbbing doubloons pale
into focus as destroyers floodlit
gravel hulls nesting at anchor
the day hauls its catch reveille
already an instinct arranged in ranks
in darkness they stare at the wind
windows fade and clear drawn taut for colors
at the flagpole halyards whip
time for its precise moment burbles
aloud to sound then sleeps carrying cadences
shake stiff bodies alive
to barking voices recruits fall to

✪ STEFAN JOVANOVICH, a graduate of Harvard College, is at present an officer in the United States Navy. He is writing, in addition to poetry, a personal account of the Vietnamese conflict.

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Sweet Shivering Rain

RICHARD LARKIN

Such sweet shivering rain,
And the stars shine still.
My mind closed today
When we caught spring
Snoozing on the beach.
"Can you smell the mud?"

The shuddering hard earth
Barely knows herself;
What a sleep—
That chased wild animals from
The sacred rainy day fields,
Burying their feathers,
Fat furry bodies
Beneath the freezing earth;
While the sun timidly hid
Behind the breathing grey clouds.

Oh but that is long forgotten now—
As lost friends and childhood tears.
April's wet warmth leaves behind
These wandering woes,
The kidnapped cares of all humanity.

And that's the test—
To slip outside yourself,
And know the changes made.
To walk again and talk again,
Have a friend to help you here.
(Shall I become a step in the staircase—

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A footprint in the melting snow?)
Again the gift of gladness,
Near now, dear now,
The death of sleeping fears.
Bring back the friendly madness,
The anxious aching joy
Of uncertain dreams,
That live upon a promise made,
Like an endless audience
To life's falling fears forgotten.

✪ RICHARD LARKIN attended the Phillips Exeter Academy and Yale University. His home is in Westport, Connecticut, and he is now traveling and writing.

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The Hero on His Way Home

Lawrence Raab

A gathering of whiteness before morning
Rough sheets tightened against the wind
Always it is the same kind of beginning
Gifts and wishes ceremonies of farewell
Slowly the ship leans toward another island
where they will not know your face
though long ago you stopped growing old

Tonight while Orion floats above the mast
and all directions for once seem clear
you dream of losing hold
reckless between the fingers of a god
whose name you can never remember
And you think If only I could begin correctly
I might discover which way to turn

Everything must be lost
wealth arms all companions
Your ship groans beneath you
Gray water rattles into the wood
Speak to the dead and what do they say
I died for you please bury me
What can I say to help tell me what can I say

You will remember
the stuck whine of their tongues years later
in the scrubbed hall

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under the sane roof
while your son grows restless by the fire
your wife more cautious and removed

You will feel a hand tremble upon a knee
as if something had always been wrong
and turning you will whisper
to whatever goddess favors that hour
Lady, listen

Gently then she tells you
where it was you were never going

✪ LAWRENCE RAAB was a recipient of a Book-of-the-Month Club Creative Writing Fellowship in 1968. His poems have appeared in *Poetry, Poetry Northwest,* the *Denver Quarterly* and other magazines. Upon graduation from Middlebury College he was awarded a Fulbright grant to study in England.

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Autumn Lament

PAUL SMYTH

The crop is in, but nowhere near enough.
The nights come now so soon, so thin, that I
Can scarcely care if barns are locked or not.
They lean, they want to fall; the doors now swing
And creak that I forgot.

I lose my days among the house and fields
That took six loves for forty meager crops
And thread new thoughts of those departed lives.
They knew before I knew—three run-off sons
And three defeated wives.

This evening I have watched and felt the sun
Fade pale beyond my wheat-exhausted fields
And dust its coldest light on soil and stubble.
My heart alone now gives the world a sound
Repeating heavy trouble.

The crop is in, but nowhere near enough.
I cannot sleep; I roam to learn the dark
And learn that sleep will never force a change.
My worn-out body joins the stubbled fields,
My mind the haunted grange.

✪ PAUL SMYTH's poems have appeared or are scheduled to appear in various periodicals including the *Atlantic*, the *Harvard Advocate*, the *Massachusetts Review*, the *Literary Review* and the *Sewanee Review*. Currently he divides his time between writing and grading for Harvard University Extension's freshman composition course. Mr. Smyth lives with his wife and two children in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

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Uncle Tom and Tiny Tim

Some Reflections on the Cripple as Negro

LEONARD KRIEGEL

> *I find myself suddenly in the world and I recognize that I have one right alone: that of demanding human behavior from the other.*
>
> Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

IT WAS NIETZSCHE who reminded the nineteenth century that man can only define himself when he recognizes his true relation both to the *self* and to the *other*. When man accepts the umbilical cord tying him to society, he does so with the knowledge that he must eventually destroy it if only to re-tie it more securely. Nietzsche was not alone. The men who wrote the Old and New Testaments, the Greek poets, indeed, almost all the saints and apocalyptic madmen who embroider the history of Western civilization like so many flares in our darkness—for them, as for Freud, recognition of self is the first step toward recognition of the other. "I attack only those things against which I find no allies, against which I stand alone," Nietzsche wrote. If such sentiments have the uncomfortable ring of a rhetoric that might be better forgotten today, this is only because the particular kind of inhumanity to which Nietzsche called attention has become so much greater, so much more dense and impenetrable, than it was in his time.

What Nietzsche wrote is especially applicable to the cripple and to those men and women who inhabit, however partially, the cripple's world. It is noteworthy that, at a time when in virtually every corner of the globe those who have been invisible to them-

✪ LEONARD KRIEGEL is an assistant professor of English at the City College of New York. He is currently lecturing at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands. He is the author of *The Long Walk Home* and of numerous articles on literature and education in *Commonweal*, the *Nation* and *Dimensions*. At present, Mr. Kriegel is completing a book on Edmund Wilson.

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selves and to those they once conceived of as masters now stridently demand the right to define meaning and behavior in their own terms, the cripple is still asked to accept definitions of what he is, and of what he should be, imposed on him from outside his experience. In the United States alone, spokesmen for the Negro, the Puerto Rican, the Mexican, the Indian have embarked upon an encounter with a society that they believe has enriched itself at their expense, that has categorized them by cataloguing their needs and desires, their hopes and fears, their anguish and courage, even their cowardice. What all such encounters share is the challenge they offer to the very limited idea of humanity that the oppressor society grants its victims. And, however insufficiently, the society does respond in its ability to see its victims anew. Late-night television interviewers vie with one another in the effort to titillate their viewers with "militant" after "militant" who rhetorically massages whatever guilt resides in the collective consciousness of white America with threats to burn Whitey's cities to the ground. It is a game that threatens to erupt into an industry, and the nation eagerly watches while David Susskind battles Allen Burke for the privilege of leading nightly sessions of ritual flagellation—all of them, no doubt, designed to enrich the national psyche.

The cripple is conspicuous by his absence from such programs. And the reason for that absence is not difficult to discover. The cripple is simply not attractive enough, either in his physical presence, which is embarrassing to host and viewers, or in his rhetoric, which simply cannot afford the bombastic luxuriance characteristic of confessional militancy. If a person who has had polio, for example, were to threaten to burn cities to the ground unless the society recognized his needs, he would simply make of himself an object of laughter and ridicule. The very paraphernalia of his existence, his braces and crutches, make such a threat patently ridiculous. Aware of his own helplessness, he cannot help but be aware, too, that whatever limited human dimensions he has been offered are themselves the product of society's largesse. Quite simply, he can take it or leave it. He does not even possess the sense of being actively hated or feared by society, for society is merely made somewhat uncomfortable by his presence. It treats him as

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if he were an errant, rather ugly, little schoolboy. The homosexual on public display titillates, the gangster fascinates, the addict touches—all play upon a nation's voyeuristic instincts. The cripple simply embarrasses. Society can see little reason for recognizing his existence at all.

And yet, he asks, why should *he* apologize? My crutches are as visible as a black man's skin, and they form a significant element, probably the most significant element, in the way in which I measure myself against the demands of the world. And the world itself serves as witness to my sufferance. A few years ago, the mayor of New York decided to "crack down" on diplomats, doctors and cripples who possessed what he described as "special parking privileges." I single Mr. Lindsay out here because he is the very same mayor who has acted with a certain degree of sensitivity and courage when dealing with the problems of blacks in the ghettos. He soon rescinded the order preventing cripples from using their parking permits, but one notes with interest his apparent inability to conceive of what such an order would inevitably do. Cripples were instructed to drive to the police station nearest their place of work, leave their cars, and wait until a police vehicle could drive them to their destination. One simply does not have to be Freud to understand that a physical handicap carries with it certain decisive psychological ramifications, chief among them the anxiety-provoking question of whether or not one can make it—economically, socially and sexually—on one's own. Forcing a man who has great difficulty in walking to surrender his car, the source of his mobility, is comparable to calling a black man "boy" in a crowd of white onlookers. The mayor succeeded only in reminding me, and the thousands of other cripples who live in New York, that my fate was in his hands and that he controlled my destiny to an extent I did not wish to believe. He brought me once again face-to-face with what Fanon means when he writes, "Fervor is the weapon of choice of the impotent." Fanon, of course, was writing about being black in a psychologically white world, but the analogy is neither farfetched nor unusual. Uncle Tom and Tiny Tim are brothers under the skin.

About six months after I arrived in the New York State Re-

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construction Home in West Haverstraw in 1944, a fellow patient, who had been in the home for more than a year, casually remarked, "They got you by the hump. No matter which way you turn, they got you." At that time, I was not yet twelve, and I took so bland an overture with all the suspicion and self-righteousness of a Boy Scout who finds himself thrust into the center of a gang war. *I,* for one, knew that I had been born to be saved and I was concerned only with caking the shell of my determination to succeed. I simply was not going to be a *cripple.* (I wouldn't even permit myself to use the word then, not even to think it.) I was determined to do everything I had been told I must do by doctors, nurses, physical therapists, by anybody who seemed to me an authority on "my condition." However mysteriously, I was convinced that the task of restoring nerves to my dead legs lay in obediently listening to my superiors, and I accepted anyone's claim to superiority on the very simple and practical basis that he could walk. If I listened, if I obeyed without questioning, I would someday once again lead "a normal life." The phrase meant living in the way my superiors lived. I could virtually taste those words, and for years afterward I could be sent off into a redemptive beatitude if anybody told me that I was on my way toward leading "a normal life." For the cripple, the first girl kissed, the first money earned, the first restaurant entered alone—all are visible manifestations of redemption, symbolic of "a normal life."

In my ignorance, I did not understand that my fellow patient had simply unfolded what would ultimately seem a truism. He understood something that I could not have admitted to myself, even if I had been brave enough to recognize it. My life was not my own, and it would take immense effort for me ever to control it—even to the extent that anyone not crippled can control his life. Whoever *they* were, they had got me, too. And no matter which way I turned, they would decide, in their collective wisdom, how my fate was to be carved out. Nor was it me as an individual cripple alone whom they had got. I was soon to discover that, in varying degrees, they had my family also. Disease is a sharing, a gray fringe of existence where man, however protesting, remains if not at his most communal, then at his most familial. For the

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cripple, the message of disability is invariably personal, and he carries with the physical reminder—the eyes that do not see, the limp, the rigid fear of undergoing an epileptic seizure in some strange corner of the universe, the bitter dregs of a mind that he realizes works neither wisely nor too well—the knowledge that he is, in some remarkably fundamental way, the creator of those who have created him. Perhaps it is not what Wordsworth had in mind, but the cripple knows that the child is father to the man—and to the woman, too—, especially when that child's existence is conditioned by the peculiar nature of his handicap. There is no choice. "No matter which way you turn, they got you." The cripple, at least, has the immediacy of his own struggle to overcome. His parents have little more than their obligation to his birth.

The cripple, then, is a social fugitive, a prisoner of expectations molded by a society that he makes uncomfortable by his very presence. For this reason, the most functional analogy for the life he leads is to be found in the Negro. For the black man, now engaged in wresting an identity from a white society apparently intent on mangling its own, has become in America a synonym for that which insists on the capacity of its own being. At the risk of demanding from Black America more than it can yet give itself, let me suggest that here we have both analogy and method. No one can teach the cripple, can serve as so authoritative a model in his quest for identity, as can the black man. I say this in spite of my knowledge that Black America may simply be fed up with serving the society in any manner whatsoever. "To us," writes Fanon, "the man who adores the Negro is as 'sick' as the man who abominates him." It is not the black who must offer explanations. Far more than the cripple, he has been the victim of television interviewers, of scientific sociologists of the soul, of those seemingly innumerable bearers of "truth," those contemporary witch doctors intent on analyzing us all to death. For the cripple, the black man is a model because he is on intimate terms with a terror that does not recognize his existence and is yet distinctly personal. He is in the process of discovering what he is, and he has known for a long time what the society conceives him to be. His very survival guarantees him the role of rebel. What he has been forced to learn is

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how to live on the outside looking in. Until quite recently, he was not even asked how he liked it. But this has been the essential fact of the black's existence and it is with this very same fact that the cripple must begin, for he, too, will not be asked how he likes it. He, too, must choose a self that is not the self others insist he accept. Just as Uncle Tom, in order to placate the power of white America, learned to mask his true self until he felt himself in a position of total desperation or rising hope (or some combination of the two), so the cripple has the right, one is tempted to say the responsibility, to use every technique, every subterfuge, every mask, every emotional climate—no matter how false and seemingly put on—to alter the balance in his relation to the world around him.

His first step is obvious. He must accept the fact that his existence is a source of discomfort to others. This is not to say that he is not permitted to live with comfort and security; these, in fact, are the very gifts his society is most willing to grant him. The price he is expected to pay, however, is the same price the black man has been expected to pay, at least until very recently: he must accept his "condition," which implies not that he accept his wound but that he never show more of that wound than society thinks proper. He is incapable of defining what selfhood is. His needs will be met, but not as he might wish to meet them.

I was thirteen when I returned to the city after almost two years of life in a rehabilitation home. A rather valiant attempt to rehabilitate me had been made there. I had been taught a number of interesting ways in which to mount a bus; I had been taught to walk on crutches with the least possible strain on my arms. I was a rather lazy patient who lived in the corridors of his own fantasy, but I cannot deny that a great deal of effort was expended upon me by a number of people who were truly interested in my welfare. Looking back, I can do little but acknowledge this and voice my gratitude.

Unfortunately, those people whose task it was to rehabilitate me had also made certain assumptions about me and the world I was to inhabit after I left the home. The assumption about me was simple: I should be grateful for whatever existence I could

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scrape together. After all, there had been a time when my life itself had been forfeit and, compared to many of my peers in the ward, I was relatively functional. About the world, the assumption was equally simple—although here, perhaps, less forgivable. Society existed. Whatever it meted out to the cripple, the cripple accepted. The way of the world was not to be challenged.

I did not know what to expect when I arrived back home in the Bronx, although I sensed that my relationship to others was bound to be that of an inferior to a superior. But I did not know what form that inferiority would take. No one had bothered to teach me—no one had even bothered to mention—the position I would occupy in the world outside the ward. No one had told me the extent to which I would find myself an outsider. And no one had told me about the fear, anguish and hatred that would swirl through my soul as I was reminded every day that I was a supplicant.

The experience that scars must be lived through before it can be absorbed. Which is why therapy can only soothe and art can create. The reality remains the thing itself. One can go so far as to suggest that the very existence of language creates a barrier between the reality the cripple faces when he returns home and what has been suggested to him about that reality. Even if those responsible for rehabilitating me had been more forthright, more honest, it would have made little difference. Only the situation itself could absorb my energy and interests, not a description or an explanation of that situation. Once again, the analogy to the black condition is appropriate: the first time the word *nigger* is hurled at a black child by a representative of white America becomes his encounter with the thing itself, the world as it is.

In my own case, I was rather lucky. Looking back, withdrawal and/or paranoia seem to have been distinct possibilities, neither of which has been my fate. Perhaps what saved me was that I found myself too numbed to be shocked. There were two possible outs, which, in a sense, complemented each other. The first was to fantasize. Both fantasy and dreams are left to the cripple—and there is a great deal to be said for any possession of one's own. The other was to compete in the world of the "normals."* Obviously,

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such competition was bound to be false, but it served to make the fantasies somewhat more real in that it fed my illusions of potency. I recall one incident in particular, perhaps my most vivid recollection of the strange sort of humiliation I encountered. I had been arguing—I forget about what—with a friend. Enraged at something he said, I challenged him to fight. He agreed, but most reluctantly. Fighting a cripple would not reflect creditably on him in the neighborhood, but, true to the obligations of adolescence, he knew that not to have accepted would be a sign of weakness and sentimentality. His compromise was to insist that we wrestle on the ground. We did, and, naturally, he wound up on top of me until his mother arrived to pull him off. Although brief, the fight itself had been highly satisfying. It enabled me to forget momentarily the fact that I was a cripple. We met if not as equals then at least as combatants on the same battleground. But then I heard his mother's shrill scolding as she escorted him away, "*You* are not to fight with a cripple!" And I knew that, once again, my vulnerability had been seen by all. It had not been a fight between two adolescents. It had been, instead, a fight between a normal and a cripple. I could live with the fight. In fact, until I heard her voice, it supplied me with an illusion of potency I would have cherished. But her words were my reality.

A few months after I returned, I began going twice weekly to the Joint Disease Hospital on Madison Avenue and 124th Street. The fusion of cripple and Negro crystallized in my mind during my forays into that alien country. I like to think the Joint Disease Hospital was in Harlem by design rather than by accident. As I surveyed the dingy streets surrounding it or waited in that antiseptic lobby, I had ample opportunity to observe the life surrounding me. More than half the patients were black. And they seemed uniformly solemn, hostile, nursing a hard-core resistance to all the social workers, doctors and nurses who first-named them. While those in authority were themselves a fairly liberal mixture

* I have taken this term from Erving Goffman's remarkably stimulating little book, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Prentice-Hall, 1963). I would like to acknowledge also what is an obvious debt to Norman Mailer's *The White Negro,* which, like so much of Mailer's work, forces the reader to confront himself. And I should add here that David Riesman was kind enough to read this essay and to ask me the kind of questions that I needed to be asked.

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of black and white, the power they represented went beyond pigmentation. They were flesh-and-blood embodiments of society's virtue and charity; they were ready, willing and, to the extent they were capable, eager to cure the leper of his sores, if for no other reason than that they recognized, as we lepers ourselves recognized, that the world for which they stood as subalterns needed both the leper and his sores. What, after all, are faith, hope and charity to a man who claims to be civilized, except insofar as they are demonstrable and serve to create individual virtue? One sometimes wonders whether the ultimate epitaph for Western civilization will not be, "I gave."

On my first visit to the Joint Disease Hospital, my mother accompanied me. A new perspective thus unfolded: the victim as victimizer. I already knew what my getting polio had done to her. But as long as I was away from home, her weekly visits did little more than embarrass me. Here, however, her presence was a very tangible confirmation of my guilt. On the long ride from the northeast Bronx to Harlem, she had been extremely nervous. When we arrived at the hospital's outpatient clinic, she seated herself—before the social worker assigned to interview her—with that peculiarly aggressive hesitancy so characteristic of the eastern European immigrant. She had learned that one dealt with those in power with respect, humility and firmness. After the interview, we seated ourselves as conspicuously as possible in the front row of the waiting room. All around us, people were waiting to be called into the inner sanctum, most of them staring glumly at the yellow curtains that guarded each cubicle like a mask for pain. My mother grew increasingly uncomfortable. To be the mother of a cripple, I began to understand, was to be the victim of something one simply could not understand. While I had to wrestle with my knowledge that those whose legs functioned were my superiors, she had to wrestle with her suspicion that she had somehow done something to create her fate. Neither God nor his justice are blind. One received in life what one deserved.

The hospital, the waiting in the lobby, the sullen faces around us, the forbidding presence of doctors and nurses gloved by a silence broken only by their occasional whispers to one another—all

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depicted a world she was henceforth to inhabit. I myself was relatively at ease. This was more or less the way things had been for two years. For my mother, it was original, a slow-motion film of what lay in wait for her, chipping into whatever sense of security she had been able to muster before we left the apartment. To her credit, she refused to panic. When my name was finally called by the receptionist, she entered the inner sanctum and answered questions with honesty and even with pride in her capacity to endure the intimate disclosure of her suffering. Then a doctor examined me, murmured something about "doing our best," and the ordeal was over. My mother glowed. It was as if she had come through some terrible ordeal, marked but not scarred.

My mother did not need Harlem as I did. She knew enough about endurance; that Faulknerian virtue so apparent in those brittle streets. She came through what was, for her, an ordeal and a humiliation, and she came through far more intact than I would come through. She possessed the endurance of her instincts. And she herself was as alien to this America as anyone walking the streets of Harlem, for the kind of endurance I am speaking about here is as much a matter of geography as it is of culture.

Only by existing does the black man remain black and the cripple remain a cripple. A singular, most unfunny lesson. But the cripple could profit from it. The condition of the Negro is imposed from outside. Obviously, this is not altogether true of the cripple. But while his physical condition is not imposed from outside, the way in which he exists in the world is. His relationship to the community is, by and large, dependent upon the special sufferance the community accords him. And whether he wishes to or not, the cripple must view himself as part of an undefined community within the larger community. But there is no sense of shared relationships or pride. Cripples do not refer to each other as "soul brothers." And regardless of how much he may desire to participate in the larger community, the cripple discovers that he has been offered a particular role that society expects him to play. He is expected to accede to that role's demands. And just as it is considered perfectly legitimate to violate a black man's privacy to bolster assumptions that the nonblack world makes,

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so it is perfectly legitimate to question the cripple about virtually any aspect of his private life. The normal possesses the right to his voyeurism without any obligation to involve himself with its object. He wants the picture drawn for him at the very moment that he refuses to recognize that the subject of his picture is, like him, a human being. "If you prick us, do we not bleed?" asks Shylock of his persecutors. The cripple's paraphrase might well be, "If you wish to see my wound, can you deny me the right to show you my self?" But voyeurism is the normal's form of non-involvement. The experience of being the recipient of unasked-for attention is as common to cripples as it is to blacks. Each is asked to show those aspects of his "condition" that will reinforce the normal's assumptions about what the cripple (or black) *feels like,* what he wants, and what he is.

I can remember my neighbors, on my return home, praying for me, inquiring about my health, quoting for my benefit the words of Christ, St. Francis, Akiba and F. D. R.* I can remember their lecturing me, advising me, escorting me. Drunks voluntarily shared their wisdom with me. Almost everyone *did* things for me —except, of course, to see me. For to have seen me would have entailed recognizing my existence as an individual *me,* that kind of personal encounter that results in a stripping away of stereotype and symbol and a willingness to accept the humanity of the other, at whatever personal cost.

One can object that this view simply distorts the problem of the cripple. It is not the black man and the cripple alone who suffer from invisibility in America. The proliferation of books on alienation and anxiety, the increasing sense of disaffiliation from which our younger people suffer, the seemingly endless number of fads, pseudo religions, life sciences, and spiritual hobbyhorses that clutter the landscape of life in these United States all testify to this. Ultimately, such an objection contains great validity. But one must first see it within the particular situation in which

* Roosevelt's ability to "beat" polio was for me, as well as for most of the boys in ward with me, what Kenneth Burke speaks of as a "symbolic action." Burke, of course, is dealing with literary criticism and his categories are derived from the study of literature and are all verbal. But an icon living within the boundaries of one's memory may serve a similar function to that which Burke had in mind.

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the cripple exists: the possibilities affording relief to others are not usually open to the cripple. There is no way, of course, to define degrees of alienation and invisibility with any sense of accuracy. But one can suggest that if most persons are only half-visible, then the cripple, like the black man until recently, is wholly invisible. Stereotypes persist long after reality fades away; for us, Uncle Tom still prays on bent knees while Tiny Tim hobbles through the world on huge gushes of sentiment and love. But let us see the world as it is, for the world itself has perfected the ability to see what it wishes to see and only what it wishes to see. Those stolid burghers who lived only a few miles from the death camps in Germany possessed a vague idea of what was taking place within those camps, but they never permitted the vagueness to make itself concrete, to push itself forward onto the individual consciousness.

The community, then, makes certain assumptions about the cripple. Whether verifiable or not, it behaves on the basis of those assumptions. The cripple is judged (as are the members of his family in terms of their relation to him), but the judgments are rendered by those for whom neither the cripple nor his family possess any meaningful reality. His "condition" is an abstraction; he himself is not quite real. Who is going to recognize *me?* asks the cripple. But society has already called into question the very existence of that *me* for it refuses to look at that which makes it uncomfortable. And so it leaves the cripple, doubting his potency, not quite ready to face his primary obligation—to extend understanding to himself, to accept the fact that his problems exist now, here, in this world, that they are problems for which relief must be sought, and that his "condition" is arbitrary but not absolute. Choices, as well as obligations, exist within the boundaries of his possibilities.

To strike out on his own in the face of a society whose smugness seems, at times, conspiratorial is difficult. As an attitude, smugness goes beyond indifference. And it is far more harmful. Smugness is the asset of the untouched, the virtue of the oblivious, and the badge of the unthreatened. It is the denial of the existence of that which threatens one's comfort, the right to judge

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whatever and whenever the smug believe judgment is called for. Smugness is the constant reminder of the line that exists between those who have not been touched by the world's terror and those who have. Smugness is a denial of the motion of the universe, an assumption that time stands still and that mortality itself can be conquered. The cripple knows better; for him, it is time and motion together that form the dialectic of rage.

What the cripple must face is being pigeonholed by the smug. Once his behavior is assumed from the fact that he is a cripple, it doesn't matter whether he is viewed as holy or damned. Either assumption is made at the expense of his individuality, his ability to say "I." He is expected to behave in such-and-such a way; he is expected to react in the following manner to the following stimulus. And since that which expects such behavior is that which provides the stimulus, his behavior is all too often Pavlovian. He reacts as he is expected to react because he does not really accept the idea that he can react in any other way. Once he accepts, however unconsciously, the images of self that his society presents him, then the guidelines for his behavior are clear-cut and consistent.

This is the black man's conflict, too. And it is exactly here that black militancy has confronted the enmity of white society. White America is probably willing to absorb the black American; what it may not be willing to do is to permit the black American to absorb himself. Negro anxiety, rage and anger are seen only as threats to the primacy of white America when they probably should be seen as the black man's effort to rid himself of all sorts of imposed definitions of his proper social "role." The black view must be total. Given the experience of having been born black in a white world, it is difficult for the black man to think about his life in terms other than color or race. The totality of his experience gives him no edge. And what he witnesses is forced into the mold of what he has known. I once received an essay from a black student describing Canova's *Perseus Holding the Head of Medusa* in the Metropolitan Museum of Art as a depiction of "the contemporary black crisis." When I questioned what she had seen, I discovered that most of the other black students in the class be-

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lieved that one had the right, perhaps even the obligation, to see that statue and everything else in terms of "the black crisis."

If one calls this confusion, it is a confusion that the cripple shares. For one thing, the cripple is not sure of just who is and who isn't his enemy; for another, he must distrust the mask of language just as the black man does; for a third, he cannot help but see the world itself as the source of his humiliation. He is "different" at the very moment he desires to be created in another's image. And he must feel shame at the expression of such a desire. If anything, his situation is even more difficult than the black's, at least as far as his ability to find relief is concerned. If the black man's masculinity is mangled, he can still assert it in certain ways. Black actors assuage his hunger for a heroic identity; black athletes help him forget, however temporarily, the mutilation of his being; and a worldwide renascent political movement, convinced that it represents the wave of the future, teaches him that his blackness—the very aspect of his existence that he has been taught to despise—is "beautiful" and is to become the foundation of the new life he will create for himself.

Whether this assessment of his situation is accurate is of no immediate concern, for what we are interested in is its validity as an analogy for the life of the cripple. Black Americans now believe that they possess choices and that they need not live as victims. They are now engaged in the struggle to force society to accept, or at the least to accommodate itself to, the black conception of how blacks are to live. The cripple's situation is more difficult. If it exists at all, his sense of community with his fellow sufferers is based upon shame rather than pride. Nor is there any political or social movement that will supply him with a sense of solidarity. If anything, it is probably more difficult for the cripple to relate to "his own" than to the normals. Louis Battye, an English novelist born with muscular dystrophy, has graphically expressed how the cripple sees himself not merely as the symbol of what society thinks he is but of what he actually is.

> Somewhere deep inside us is the almost unbearable knowledge that the way the able-bodied world regards us is as much as we have the right to expect. We are not full members of that world, and the vast

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majority of us can never hope to be. If we think otherwise we are deluding ourselves. Like children and the insane, we inhabit a special sub-world, a world with its own unique set of referents.

Battye also speaks of the cripple's "irrelevance to the real business of living." His observations are acute and courageous. One suspects that most cripples feel this about themselves, although few have the courage to admit it. A cripple must see himself as an anachronism, for virtually everything his culture offers him is designed to reinforce his sense of inferiority, to point out to him that he is tolerated in spite of his stigma and that he had best keep his distance if he wishes society's approval. But Tiny Tim is, with whatever modern variations, still his image. He may insist that Tiny Tim is not his true self. But it frames society's picture of him. It is still the model for his behavior.

Self-hatred, then, must be the legacy he derives from his consciousness of what society thinks of him. With what else can he confront a society that values physical strength and physical beauty? (Regardless of how bizarre that sense of beauty may sometimes seem, it remains outside the cripple's range of possibilities.) If growing old is a threat to modern Americans, how much greater a threat is physical deformity or mental retardation?

And what are the cripple's options? Most of the options traditionally available to the "gifted" or "exceptional" Negro are not available to him, since his restrictions are almost invariably functional and rather severely limit the territory he can stake out as his own. He cannot become a movie idol; he cannot become an athlete; he cannot even become a soldier and risk his life in defense of that which has rejected him. His choices are simply far more limited than are the choices of a black man.

But what he can do is to learn one of the fundamental lessons of American Negro history, a lesson that probably accounts for the growing tension between white and black: he can create his own individual presence out of the very experience of his rejection. The black man in America is an obvious model for him, not because of any inherent Faulknerian virtue but because he has spent three hundred and fifty years learning how to deal with his tormentors. Without romanticizing him, we recognize that he has

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earned his status. It has made him, at one and the same time, both tougher and more paranoid than white America. And a certain amount of toughness as well, perhaps, as a certain amount of paranoia might serve to change the cripple's own conception of self. There is no formula that can force Tiny Tim to stand on his own two crutches. But the cripple can certainly make a start by refusing the invisibility thrust over him by the culture. He can insist on being seen.

In the folklore of white America, Harlem has long been considered exotic as well as dangerous territory. Perhaps it is both exotic and dangerous. But from 1946 to 1951, the years during which I was an outpatient at the Joint Disease Hospital, it was one of the more comfortable places in New York for me. I do not mean to voice that old ploy about those who themselves suffer being more sympathetic, more receptive to the pain of others (although there is probably a certain limited truth here, too). All I mean is that in Harlem I first became conscious of how I could outmanipulate that in society which was trying to categorize me. It is probably a slum child's earliest lesson, one that he learns even before he sets foot in a school, for it is a lesson that carries with it the structure of his survival. Normals begin to appear not as particularly charitable human beings but rather as individuals able to band together for purposes of mutual self-interest. They possess their environment, and the environment itself (which for the black child and for the cripple is part of the enemy's world) is for them a visible symbol of their success.

The normals are a tangible presence in Harlem, or at least they were during my tenure as an outpatient at the Joint Disease Hospital. The normals are *they,* the people in authority—police for the black child, nurses, doctors and social workers for me. It was in this confrontation with the normals that I first noticed what is now called the Negro's "marginality" to the kind of existence the rest of America is supposed to lead. On the short strolls I took on my crutches through the streets surrounding the hospital, the single fact I constantly confronted was the way in which the non-Harlem world imposed its presence on the community. Individuals walking the streets simply froze in its presence. One was

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always aware of a potential breaking out, an explosion of amassed raw frustration and distorted energy. I can remember stiffening with tension when a patrol car cruised past. Now it must be remembered that I was white, that I was an adolescent, that I moved with great difficulty on braces and crutches, and that I was probably the last person in Harlem who had anything to fear from the police. But none of this changed the fact that in Harlem a patrol car was simply the most decisive presence of the normals one could conceive of—and whether it was because I felt comfortable in those streets or because the air smelled differently or because the tension that seemed to surround me was part of the very manner, the very life, of the community, I remember stiffening with fear and guilt and anxiety. Had I been a black adolescent with legs that functioned, I probably would have run, assuming my guilt as a corollary of my birth. Just as such a boy was a victim, so I knew that I was already a victim: the truth was that I was already on short-term loan to the needs of the outside world. I could exist as an individual only insofar as I could satisfy those needs. At least, this is what I had absorbed. For anything else, I would have to struggle. And at that time (I was not yet sixteen), I was not only not smart enough to resist but I still had fantasies of leaving the world of the cripple. That, too, was part of the legacy. To choose hope rather than despair is natural enough. But it had been five years since the embrace of my virus and I still could not bring myself to admit that my condition was permanent.

The cripple's struggle to call himself *I,* which is, I take it, what we mean by a struggle for identity, is always with him. He can be challenged in his illusions of sufficiency by the most haphazard event. I used to drop into a drugstore across the street from the Joint Disease Hospital while I waited for the car that was to take me back to the Bronx. It was the kind of drugstore one still saw before 1960. Despite its overstuffed dinginess, perhaps even because of it, the drugstore seemed portentously professional. Somehow, its proximity to the hospital gave it a certain dignity. The man who ran its operations was short and heavy, courteous and solicitous. I remember that his hair was thinning and that he smoked cigarettes in a manner that made smoking it-

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self seem an act of defiance. He would occasionally join me as I sat at the counter drinking coffee and, more often than not, he would inform me of what *the Negro* wanted. I have an image of him, smoke blowing through flared nostrils, staring at the door as he spoke. At such times, he seemed oblivious to the presence of black customers and the black counterman alike. "They want to be accepted. They would like the white man to give them a chance to show what they can do." I had heard the words for years and I could even nod in rhythmical agreement. And then one day he added, in a voice as casual and well-intentioned as when he told me what *they* wanted, "Why don't you plan to get yourself a nice store? Like a greeting card store. Or something like that. Where you don't have to work so hard but you could still earn your own living. That's what you should do."

And so I learned that I existed for him as an abstraction, that he saw through me as if I, too, were smoke he was blowing through his nostrils. *The cripple* had been linked to *the Negro.* A new *they* had been born. As a man of the world, who did not need to move beyond abstraction, he assumed that he had every right in the world to decide what *the cripple* or *the Negro* wanted. He knew what I "should do" because he possessed two good legs and I didn't. Not being a cripple makes one an expert on *the cripple,* just as not being black makes one an expert on *the Negro.* It was another example of the normal deciding how that which dared not to be normal should live.

In his conclusion to *Black Skin, White Masks,* Fanon discovers that the final myth he must destroy is the myth of a "black world," for such a myth is ultimately dependent upon an equally inhuman "white world." "There are," Fanon insists, "in every part of the world men who search." This seems to me one of the few workable visions one can accept, despite the fact that I know that, for the cripple, even the act of surrendering himself to the ranks of those who search is enveloped by potential disaster. The cripple must recognize this and he must face it. For no matter how limited his functioning in the society of normals may be, there are certain definitive guidelines that he is offered. Once he has accepted being pigeonholed by society, he finds that he is safe as long as he is

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willing to live within the boundaries of his categorization. To break out of its confines calls for an act of will of which he may already be incapable. Should he choose to resist, he will probably discover that he has inflamed those who see themselves as kind and tolerant. My inability to tell that man to mind his own business was an act of spiritual acquiescence. Had I told him where to get off, I would have undoubtedly been guilty of an unpardonable sin in his eyes. But I would have moved an inch forward toward personal emancipation. Cripples, though, simply did not address normals in such a way. Tiny Tim was still my image of the cripple. And Tiny Tim had always been grateful for the attention conferred upon him by his betters—any kind of attention. My inability to defy that man was more than a reflection of my weakness: it was also the embodiment of his success, the proof of the legitimacy of his assumption. On my next visit to the Joint Disease Hospital, I dropped in once again for another cup of coffee and another quick chat.

And so the task of the cripple is to re-create a self, or rather to create a true self, one dependent upon neither fantasy nor false objectivity. To define one's own limitations is as close as one can come to meaningful independence. Not to serve is an act of courage in this world, but if it leaves one merely with the desire for defiance then it ultimately succumbs to a different form of madness. The black man who rejects "white culture" must inevitably reject his own humanity, for if all he can see in Bach or Einstein is skin color then he has become what his tormentors have made of him. The only true union remains with those "who search." For the cripple, too, there are no others. To embrace one's braces and crutches would be an act of the grotesque; but to permit one's humanity to be defined by others because of those braces and crutches is even more grotesque. Even in Dachau and Buchenwald, the human existed. It was left to the searchers to find it.

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The Reading Problem

MORTIMER SMITH

ONE OF THE OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS for those of us concerned with public education is attendance at countless conferences where nowadays we are apt to sit around and deplore the fact that the schools are beset by problems. Sometimes the discussion has to do with numbers, sometimes with money or personnel. Lately it is often concerned with those revolutionary winds of doctrine that, having battered the colleges and universities, now threaten the lower schools. There is one pressing question, however, that is rarely discussed, a question that strikes at the heart of the educational enterprise. I refer to reading and how it is taught in American schools. The subject is aired, of course, at gatherings of reading specialists but almost never at general educational conferences. One reason for its absence is that the reading experts, after the manner of specialists, guard their science jealously and are apt to make the generalist feel that reading theory is so mysterious as to be beyond his ken. Dissent is slowly growing, however, among educators and laymen who are outside the reading establishment. More and more outsiders question the monolithic design for reading instruction which the specialists—centered in the schools of education, the International Reading Association, and in the offices of textbook publishers—have fastened on the public schools. Any system, say the dissenters, that produces so many failures can't be all good.

The whole reading question is a complex one and can be presented only in bare outline in a brief article. I will attempt here to do several things: show the magnitude of reading failure; describe the dominant theory of reading instruction to which that failure can be traced; list some other factors affecting reading achieve-

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ment; and give a few reasons why there is now justification for cautious optimism about reading improvement. Perhaps as good a place as any to begin is with an outsider who told us almost fifteen years ago why Johnny can't read. Rudolf Flesch's book was a popularized and sometimes oversimplified treatment of the reading controversy but it was a tract for the times of the utmost importance. As a best-selling book it made a large public aware of the fact that the orthodox method of teaching beginning reading in American schools deliberately excludes decoding of the sounds the letters make in favor of memorizing whole words by sight. Flesch maintained that this look-and-say method is the cause of Johnny's poor reading. The reaction of the specialists to Flesch was unanimous: It was not true that Johnny was a poor reader; but if it was true, Dr. Flesch's prescription, a large dose of organized phonics, would be a ridiculous remedy. Lay critics are never looked on kindly by insiders, especially in academic and educational circles, and Flesch was pilloried with almost savage roughness.

Battle scarred by the vehement attacks, Flesch retired from the reading wars, but the issues he raised have not gone away. Evidence that Johnny still can't read floods in upon us, from the objective data showing draft rejection rates for illiteracy to the subjective complaints of employers about the number of applicants who cannot read sufficiently to complete a simple application form. In late 1966 the California State Department of Education released the results of reading tests given to all first- and second-graders in the state, which showed these pupils "to considerable disadvantage," according to the department, when compared with national norms, which themselves are too low. The reading scores that public pressure has forced large city school systems to release show city children doing very poorly indeed in reading. Some members of the Los Angeles Board of Education have stated that reading scores in their city constitute "a crisis." In the elementary schools and junior highs in New York City one out of five pupils is two or more years behind the normal reading level. Reading problems are by no means confined to young children. Writing in 1961, and there is no reason to think things have improved since then, Jacques Barzun spoke of such problems at the graduate level: "I can say that among

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the highly selected graduate students in the university where I teach I find about one in ten who needs coaching in the elements of literacy—spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and diction. And these students cannot write because they cannot read."

Undoubtedly some reading retardation is caused by physical or mental or environmental handicaps, but it becomes increasingly obvious that the reading problem is largely a problem of pedagogy. School systems that have increased their remedial staffs of reading specialists two- and three-fold without making fundamental changes in the way reading is taught find that their reading scores continue to go down. On the other hand, where the whole-word method has been discarded and replaced by a code-emphasis or phonics method, taught by teachers who know what they are doing, reading scores invariably improve. Perhaps in eighty-five percent of our schools children are still taught (or not taught) by the old method, a method based on theories of reading that have not changed substantially in forty years. Let us take a brief look at the philosophical, or doctrinal, underpinnings of this method.

The first article in the credo of the reading theorists proclaims belief in "reading readiness." Before the child is ready to be taught to read he must want to read, have a mental age of six or six and a half years, and have physical and emotional maturity. If these factors are not in balance, say the experts, teaching him to read may result in emotional disturbance or permanent reading retardation. Once the child is ready the teacher begins his instruction by having him learn a sight vocabulary, that is, he is asked to learn whole words by various devices of memory and association. The way the method works is described in "How Children Learn to Read" (revised edition, 1964), which is an official pamphlet of the U.S. Office of Education:

> The child learns in many ways. In his early chart reading he comes to know some words by position. He knows that *Williams Park* comes at the end of the first line in the chart story below.
>
> We went to *Williams Park*.
> We saw the swings.
> We saw the pond.
> We saw the ducks on the pond.

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But *Williams Park* has not only position in its favor; it has also shape and size, that is *configuration*. The other end words, "swings" and "pond" are learned partly by position and partly by auditory memory. "We saw" is learned by position and also by matching it to the same phrase above it and below it. Likeness or *comparison* offers clues to visual memory, just as do position and configuration. Repetition tends to fix the learnings.

But even in a very simple chart story like this one the *context* is the reader's most important aid. *Williams Park*, "swings" and "pond" are remembered through their meaningful relationship to the other words; "on the pond" falls into place because when the children saw them, the *ducks* were on the pond. [Why not on the *lake* or on the *water*?]

Note that what this is describing is essentially a method of guessing, not an unlocking of a logical language code. The method's objective is to teach for meaning from the beginning whereas the advocates of phonics instruction maintain that while the ultimate purpose is to get meaning, the first step in reading must be the process of turning printed symbols into sounds. (It is estimated that about eighty-five percent of the words in the English language are phonetically consistent, and most of the balance contain phonetic elements.) The majority of the leading reading theorists are adamant in opposing systematic phonetical instruction in beginning reading, claiming that research shows it is of little value, and may even be harmful. They advocate "incidental" and "postponed," rather than organized and systematic phonics. The following quotations from recognized authorities are typical. Albert J. Harris says there is evidence "which indicates that systematic phonetic training is not helpful in the low first grade, and may well be delayed until the second grade." George D. Spache says: "The true value of phonics is as a supplementary aid to word recognition, after the habit of recognition by shape and context has been firmly established." Nila Banton Smith, former president of the International Reading Association and generally considered a reading expert's expert, says that some children "aren't ready for concentrated teaching of phonics until the third or fourth grade." Professor Smith even postpones naming the letters, to say nothing of their sounds: "Second grade is the time when names of all the let-

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ters usually are learned. . . . Your child, however, probably won't be taught the letters of the alphabet in order in this grade. Alphabetical arrangement comes along in the latter part of the third grade or in the fourth grade . . ." (These quotations from Smith are contained in a pamphlet called "Sailing Into Reading: How Your Child Learns to Read in the Elementary School." This is published by the National Education Association, always an enthusiastic supporter of the antiphonics theorists.)

The chief teaching vehicle for reading in American schools has long been the basal reader, invariably authored by leading exponents of the begin-with-whole-words-postpone-phonics school of thought. These readers are peopled by bloodless, sanitary characters named Dick and Jane or Jerry and Alice, whose conversation never rises above the "see-Spot-run" and "see-Puff-jump-down" variety. Indeed, the restricted vocabulary is an underlying principle of these readers. Beginning in the 1920's reading experts started to issue standardized word lists, supposedly based on the words most frequently used by children and young people. Although it has been estimated that average six-year-olds have a recognition vocabulary of about fifteen thousand words, the total number of words in the readers has to be meager because the reading method calls for learning them one by one. Writing in 1965 Arther S. Trace, Jr., pointed out that in three of the most widely used series of readers the total number of words used in the first grade reader was 326 for Series A, 235 for Series B, and 323 for Series C. He also pointed out that "the vocabulary in the typical Dick-and-Jane type *sixth* grade readers is less than half the recognition vocabulary of a typical first-grader." In the "ethnic" readers recently introduced in some large cities the cast of characters has been changed from nice white children to nice *café au lait* children, but there are even fewer words than in the conventional basal readers, the claim being made that inner-city children use only half the words found on primary-grade word lists. Some remarks of Margaret Mead are relevant here: "In the United States we often try to find out what people are doing, and then tell them that they are doing it and also that they should keep on doing it because this is what everyone of the same age or sex or class is doing. This produces a vicious circle.

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As a result, children are permitted to learn only what other children know, and each generation, living in a world where demands on vocabulary are greater than ever before, gets a little further behind."

The restricted vocabulary affects, of course, other subjects of the curriculum, such as science, English and the social studies. The authors of textbooks for these fields are guided by what the experts in reading tell them are the capacities of young people. One of the science series most widely used in the first three grades employs only 582 different words, including science terms. The teacher who must try to teach something meaningful about science with a vocabulary restricted to 582 words has his work cut out for him. The compilers of literary anthologies and the authors of history texts for the high schools consult the Thorndike word list to make sure that nothing is beyond the comprehension, or supposed comprehension, of their readers. The restricted vocabulary has also given birth to the bowdlerized classics, that is, abridged and simplified editions, guaranteed to reduce verbal strain, of such books as *A Tale of Two Cities, Swiss Family Robinson, Two Years Before the Mast* and *Moby Dick*. In the introduction to a pared-down version of *Moby Dick* we are told that an adaptation of this work has become a necessity because Melville's vocabulary "is beyond secondary school experience" and because "the shadowy symbolism" and "highly subjective" parts of the novel are only "for literary critics and research scholars." The adapter has kindly "trimmed out or simplified the more difficult parts, simplified the vocabulary, sentence structure and punctuation." *Moby Dick* without pain becomes *Moby Dick* without meaning.

The doctrines underlying the dominant reading theory, then, are a conglomerate of postponement and readiness, word guessing, "reading for meaning," the restricted vocabulary, and strong opposition to any method that maintains that the essential skill in beginning reading is translating or decoding the sounds of letters.

Because the reading experts are reluctant to admit any deficiencies in their theories, they constantly search for other causes for reading retardation, invariably finding a lack in the child rather than in the experts' theories. I have seen low achievement blamed

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on causes ranging from absence of books at home and too many, or too few, siblings, to TV, lack of food or sleep, and undescended testicles. At the present time we hear a great deal about "constitutional disability," or "specific dyslexia," terms used to describe organic disorders (other than blindness or deafness) that cause reading difficulties. As the number of reading failures increases so do the claims for dyslexia, estimates of its incidence ranging from eight percent of the pupil population to twenty percent. While there is undoubtedly a small number of children who are truly dyslexic, a great many who are so diagnosed are suffering from nothing more complicated than poor classroom instruction. We know that in school systems where strong programs of organized phonics are carried on the rate of reading failure is often no more than one percent. We know, too, that the therapy usually prescribed in the clinics dealing with the supposedly dyslexic child invariably includes phonetic analysis and drill in the sounds the letters make. If this is a good remedial device, why not use it in the schools before the child becomes a basket case?

There are, of course, other factors than methodological ones that affect reading achievement, especially in city schools. One factor is the negative attitude toward reading of people who ought to know better. Even the distinguished members of the President's National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children have demonstrated that they are not overly concerned with the essential first skill. A 1968 report of this group states:

> It may be that the important questions have not yet been formulated. For example, almost all programs, "innovative" as well as traditional, grow out of a general assumption that reading at normal grade levels is a major criterion of success. The Council does not criticize this criterion, but it does suggest that there are other possible criteria which might better measure the progress of disadvantaged children. We should perhaps be more concerned with such relatively uncharted fields as creativity, motivation for achievement, awareness of the varied world of adult work and of the male and female roles in family and society—the list of possibilities could be long and imaginative.

One does not, in turn, quarrel with the Council's perhaps rather amorphous criteria, but is it unreasonable to ask how we

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can measure *illiterate* students against such criteria? It seems to me that there is a definite relationship between "creativity" and the other worthy and fairly sophisticated criteria named by the Council, and reading competence.

If the Council seems lukewarm in its devotion to reading, a few philosophers of ghetto education are positively indifferent. At a conference a year ago I heard a sociologist of one of the foundations speak out in open impatience with Negro parents who demand that their children be taught to read, expressing the view that this is the least of their needs. Another worker in slum schools, attached to a university-sponsored project, expressed private agreement, saying that as the Negro's culture is nonverbal and tactile he has little need of literacy beyond the ability to read simple directions such as traffic signs. These open deriders of reading and books have unwitting allies in those linguists who want to make the slum child "bilingual." This school of linguists claims that there is a Negro dialect that is a valid language with a formal, if unrecorded, grammar, and they plead with the teacher not to corrupt this dialect by insisting on standard English as an exclusive language.

All of these attitudes affect the reading programs in city schools, but, when you add to them widespread defeatism (the "what-can-you-expect?" attitude of many teachers and administrators), it is little wonder that the slum child makes a poor showing in reading. Both those who say he doesn't need reading and those who suggest that he's too dumb to read contribute to an inevitable crisis in reading achievement.

One other factor needs to be mentioned in discussing low achievement: the contention of some sociologists that little can be done to improve the schools until the home and the community are improved. This pessimistic view is buttressed by the findings of the Coleman Report (*Equality of Educational Opportunity*), which concluded "that schools bring little influence to bear on a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context." The importance of this conclusion for the instructional program and for the teacher in the slum schools, and for financial aid to the schools, cannot be overestimated. Why spend much time trying to improve the program if you can't buck

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the pupils' social backgrounds? Why not concentrate on making the schools surrogate homes or welfare centers rather than educational institutions? Why spend extra money on trying to educate if it is a hopeless cause? As Christopher Jencks has said: "If the Report's analysis is correct, then most of the money now being spent to improve the public schools is going down the drain."

What I have written to this point adds up, admittedly, to a gloomy picture. Despite the entrenched monopolists of reading instruction, however, light does begin to break through. Groups and individuals who have carried on the Flesch argument for systematic phonics are no longer dismissed as cranks. Reform of the basal readers is taking place, although some of the changes are no more radical than putting more phonics in the teacher's manual and in the promotional brochure, and dropping the revealing word lists. California has adopted for statewide use two new basal reading series that make at least some concessions to the criticisms leveled against Dick and Jane and in any case are an improvement on the readers formerly used in that state. Some book reform has been more drastic and now, fortunately, school systems can find readers that offer some alternatives to conventional methods, that stress organized phonics in the beginning, greatly increase the number of words appearing in the early grades, and vastly improve the content by the introduction of good stories, poetry and myths. There are also on the market a number of very effective auxiliary phonics methods that do not produce their own readers. Another encouraging recent development is that many school systems (this includes New York City's) that formerly put only look-and-say readers on the approved list are now permitting teachers to experiment with phonics materials. Still another encouraging fact is that fewer teachers and parents accept the dictum that learning to read in the kindergarten or earlier is damaging to the infant psyche. And finally, as language scholars not only enter the field of reading research but write materials for classroom use, we are learning that reading theory does not have to be the monopoly of professors of education.

Ironically, the most dramatic boost for the phonics advocates has come from the researches of Jeanne Chall of the Harvard

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Graduate School of Education, a member of the reading establishment in good standing. Her study called *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, published in 1967 and sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation, has been called a "bombshell" by John Gardner, who says that it shows "that the method employed in most American schools today—all the various modifications and versions of the look-say method—is *not* the better method." That is indeed Mrs. Chall's message: after reviewing over fifty years of the research and visiting hundreds of classrooms, she came to the conclusion that a phonics or code-emphasis method is more effective in teaching primary grade children than a whole-word, reading-for-meaning method. Some of the diehards have been rather frosty toward Mrs. Chall's book, but it now seems evident that her message, coming as it does from within the fold, is going to filter down into many classrooms.

In our efforts to improve reading, there is still a long road to travel. After all, when the great majority of American children are still taught by a cumbersome and outmoded method that produces a startling number of reading failures, it can be said that we are only at the beginning of the journey. We know that we have at our command the means whereby most children can achieve mastery of the mechanics of reading at an early age. It is axiomatic that competence in reading is a necessary vocational skill, but it is also the means for experiencing pleasure, and even joy. If we can bring children to this joy at an early age, we may even be able to combat that idiot box that Professor McLuhan tells us is going to take over the world.

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The Convict and the Burgher

A Case Study of Communication and Crime

JOSEPH WHITEHILL

A WRITER CAN LIVE ANYWHERE the rent is low and there is a mailbox—which is why this story starts in Salisbury, Maryland, on the lower Eastern Shore, just over the lip of civilization. Since about half the effort a writer spends is directed toward avoiding writing, I was delighted one day in 1962 to be summoned to serve on the grand jury. Besides routinely handing down indictments of persons accused of serious crimes, members of the grand jury must go gravely about the county inspecting places like the dog pound, the air raid shelter in the basement of City Hall, and the jail. The dog pound was clean enough, but the dogs were rather low class. This was duly noted in our report. The air raid shelter was just full enough of old courthouse files to limit the remaining accommodation to the lawyers, secretaries and judges who populate City Hall, and provide them with racy reading while they were down there being saved.

The jail was god-awful. On the third floor of the courthouse—for the convenience of lawyers and judges—it comprised two bullpens for social life, one for whites and one for Negroes, separated by four-man cells. There was more room per man than in the ordinary submarine, but not a lot. There were two open toilets, one near the center of each bullpen, to assure that everyone knew what everyone else was up to. Male prisoners as well as female were

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guarded by elderly turnkeys trying not to earn money enough to jeopardize their social security. There was no provision for sunlight, fresh air or exercise. As we made our circuit about the cages, we avoided the eyes of the men locked inside, as if we sensed somehow that the guilt was ours, not theirs. We were right about that, but our report said merely that the jail was very clean.

I went home badly shaken, and next day called the Friends Prison Service Committee, in Philadelphia, to ask what I could do. A bundle of pamphlets arrived in the next mail. (We Quakers print a lot of literature, and it's all free.) Finding nothing in the pamphlets that seemed to apply to me and Salisbury, I invented my own program. Under the tolerance of the sheriff, an excellent man, I began visiting the jail two evenings a week, armed with a yellow tablet and a pencil. Any prisoner who wanted to was allowed to leave the bullpen and go with me into one of the side offices and talk. I made notes as necessary, then spent much of the following day finding lost fathers, looking for jobs for men jailed for nonsupport—jailing for nonsupport is rather like curing asthma with a tourniquet about the neck—persuading lawyers to take profitless cases, and bringing some articulateness to the men who could not explain their own defenses. This was an excellent way, of course, not to write, but I was in despair most of the time. The world of the indigent, the friendless and the ignorant is a very small, bleak place, and it is overcrowded.

There were, however, bright moments. One boy had been arrested for vagrancy. In Salisbury, a vagrant is a young man with long hair, a black leather jacket written on or not, and black leather boots, who is observed to stand on a street corner longer than two full time-cycles of the traffic light. He was just passing through, but he was detained. With pleasure, the arresting officers noted in their report that he had puncture marks on his arms. With equal or perhaps greater pleasure, I demonstrated by affidavit within a week to the state's attorney that the boy had had a job at the time of his arrest, and that his job was that of snake handler in a carnival. The puncture marks were not self-inflicted. The boy was released to catch up with the carnival.

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Another man, an illiterate Negro, was arrested for attempted rape of a twelve-year-old girl. In his gentleness, and in his concern for the eight chickens he had left unattended in the dirt yard behind his house, he did not seem to me a likely rapist, even though I did not then nor do I now *know* what a likely rapist looks like. I visited the little girl and found her saucy, jealous and vicious. I visited the doctor who had examined her after the incident, and learned that the blood on her panties had come from a sharp scratch in the groin, as might be got while skinning hurriedly over a barbed wire fence. I visited the man's wife, and learned from her what he had been ashamed to tell me—that because of a chronic genitourinary condition, he had been impotent for more than eight months. Next, I approached the sheriff and told him he had a sick man in his jail among the healthy ones. The sheriff winced, and had the man hospitalized at once. Then I approached the state's attorney and asked him if he would like to go into court to try to prove that a gentle, impotent, sick man had attempted rape on a demonstrably nasty and vengeful little girl. The man was freed immediately, which I protested. I made them keep him in the hospital, at county expense, until he was cured of his difficulty.

I can assure you that something happens to you when you become the accidental instrument of saving a man from life imprisonment or the gas chamber.

About this time I got to know the man really responsible for the rest of this oblique story. He is Kirk Davis, and at the time he seemed remarkably forbearing of me that I, as grand jury member, had lately voted to indict him for second-degree murder. (To jump ahead, he is now coordinator of a new recording for the blind project in Patuxent Institution, and is among my best friends.) We found, during my semiweekly visits with him in the Salisbury jail, that he and I shared many interests—some with agreement and others with heated argument. (It did not hurt, either, that he liked the books I brought him—books I wrote!)

What did hurt, however, was that he interrupted his stay in the Salisbury jail by escaping. The police take that sort of thing very personally; when he was returned, therefore, he was awarded

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the dubious privacy of the solitary cage-in-a-cage, with the light on all the time. Because the sheriff evidently felt that I had some sort of sedative effect on Kirk, I was invited to visit with him nightly, which I did in the comfort of his quarters.

After he was tried, convicted and sentenced, he was adjudged a defective delinquent, and was committed to Patuxent Institution, at Jessup, Maryland, where all sentences are indeterminate. As nearly as I understand it, a defective delinquent is one who has a more or less recognizable pattern in his criminal behavior, whose crimes have tended to increase in seriousness, and who is thought to be amenable to psychiatric treatment. Patuxent Institution, while still very much a prison, is one of the best. Vocational training, a full high school curriculum, crafts, sports, and group therapy all are provided. It is an experiment, created by an act of the state legislature independent of the rest of the state correctional system, and has to fight hard for its annual budget. Whereas it costs less than $1,500 a year to keep a man vegetating in the penitentiary, it costs over $7,000 a year to keep one doing something in Patuxent.

I continued to correspond with Kirk, wondering all the while what good it was doing—wondering even what the word "good" meant in this context. Sure, I enjoyed his letters and he, I thought, enjoyed mine, but so what? So what beyond simple enjoyment? The more I learned of prisons and the men in them, the more grew my despair. By then I could have told Sisyphus a thing or two. How much could mere letters accomplish?

The first clue was dropped almost by accident. In one letter, Kirk offhandedly mentioned that my letters to him were normally shared by ten to twenty other inmates. I was astonished and a little embarrassed; his letters to me, I discovered when I took trouble to notice, were read by all my family and many of my friends and students. These letters, his and mine, were the sand in the neck of the hourglass.

I fumbled awkwardly with this news. I groped. That seems to be the whole history of this time—fumbling, groping and sensing patterns that vanished when looked at closely.

In another letter, Kirk described the formation, by a small

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group of inmates, of a Great Books Class loosely organized around Mortimer Adler's Syntopicon. The men did extensive independent reading and met together five nights a week for two hours of talk. (How many of you teachers would dare ask of your students such a seminar and reading load? My own students at Johns Hopkins would flee in a body.) This group was inmate-run and inmate-organized, without the presence of either custodial or school staff. It was something of their own, and they guarded it with an astonishing proprietary jealousy. Admission to the group was carefully controlled, lest incoming opportunists wreck it in some way. The class is now in its third year. A measure of its value to the men is this: Not once since the class began has any member of it received a ticket or incident report because of an infraction of the rules of the institution. No other inmate group has anything like this record.

Still fumbling, still groping for some way to do more, I accepted Kirk's invitation to visit the Great Books Class in session. That was two years ago—a one-time invitation. It grew to my spending every Thursday night of the school year with the men. I had little to teach and much to learn. After getting over the first shock—the sound of these men, none with more than a high school education, moving easily among Kierkegaard, Sartre, Camus, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Hobbes and Saint Augustine—I was able to make a number of curious observations: All these men had I.Q.'s upward of 125; two scored more than 140. All by their histories given to action first and reflection later, they sat in the room with quiet poise, with none of the body movements that normally indicate a restless testing of kinesthesia. They showed acute interest in me—the man with the tie on—studying me carefully for hypocrisy. After all, what was I doing there without getting paid for it? Interestingly, nearly every one of the men in the group was a man of authority in the prison's subgovernment. (Every prison has two governments—the one paid by the state and whose members' names appear on the letterhead, and the other one comprising the bright cons who do all the work in return for status and cumshaw.) One more interesting observation I shall save for a bit.

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Now I must digress to pull another thread into the fabric. As you probably know, Mensa is an international group founded in 1945 to bring together the very intelligent. The requirement for membership is the passing of a standardized intelligence test in the top two percent of the population—about 148 on the Cattell Scale. I prefer to call us, instead of "the intelligent," merely those who pass culturally warped intelligence tests very well—a difference, perhaps. In the United States, Mensa's activities are chiefly to argue about its constitution, and to meet monthly in local groups to drink and show off. I joined the way most did—as a blushful joke, to get a number assigned to me, and out of curiosity. I never went to a meeting.

Here is the first of two demonstrations that just because you are intelligent, there is no guarantee that you are not simultaneously pretty stupid. In the Mensa Bulletin for January, last year, appeared a short letter describing a little group of Mensa members calling themselves Mensa Friends, who were engaged in establishing one-to-one correspondence relationships between themselves and high-intelligence felons, to share thinking of a general nature, and to give the men inside some contact with an outside world that would not involve their families.

In all of my years of work in prisons, and in all of my years of membership in Mensa, it had not occurred to me to connect the two.

I went to the next Mensa meeting in Baltimore. I told them of the men in Patuxent, and of Mensa Friends. I asked for volunteers—people to write to prisoners. The response was less than galvanic; three offered, and one of those asked, "Yes, but what happens if we write to one of these men for a year or two, then all of a sudden we find him sitting on our doorstep?" A hard question to answer, especially when fumbling and groping seemed then the mode. I forget what I said. It turns out, however, that the person who asked the question now invites his convict correspondent to Saturday night supper at his house nearly every week, on evening leave. Some questions answer themselves.

Today, thirty members of Baltimore Mensa, out of a total of

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slightly more than a hundred, are in active correspondence with Patuxent inmates.

Returning now to the Great Books Class in Patuxent, the last important thing I noticed was this: How strange it seemed to me that a man who had well-read a book called *Civilization and Its Discontents* would pronounce the author's name "Sigmund Frood," or that *The Sorrows of Young Werther* was attributed aloud to "Go-ee-the." This despite the solid evidence that the men had read the books, had understood them, and had put them into usable places in their dialogues.

A clear light opened: They had never heard the names pronounced aloud before. While they were quite easy with the use of their mispronounced words in connotation, denotation and context, they had never heard them *said.*

Among the large number of probable reasons that come to mind for this are:

1. Short schooling in dull schools.

2. Family life in which communication is chiefly by grunts, informal white papers of personal displeasure, and physical blows ranging in force from the standard shove to the satisfying knockdown.

3. The mistrust and denigration in those families of anything like smooth talk.

4. The rigidly limiting speech patterns of the peer group. In this group, highest premium of reward is given to conformity, not to variety or invention. There are two contraoperative influences working in this group. While no youth of today would use any other phrase than "Bendix throwout spring" to describe that object, there is a multiplicity of words for "cylinder head," "carburetor," "muffler," "camshaft" and other automobile parts of high cathexis affecting speed, style or owner-image.

Conversely, it is evident that in this agreed poverty of vocabulary, many code words must carry multiple meanings. Examples are: "dig," "groovy," "boss," "hip," "smack," "bust," "rap" and, of course, the ubiquitous "cool." The intended meaning in each use comes clear, insofar as it really comes clear or really *needs*

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to at the moment, almost entirely in the bath of context. This is tribalism in its prototypical manifestation—hardly the place to expect to hear Goethe and Freud so pronounced.

5. Television and radio, the chief purveyors of language to the young from "outside," have asymptotic limits to breadth of vocabulary. A recondite word like "recondite" would never make the team, no matter how useful it might be.

The intelligent boy surviving and growing in such a world puts the craft of survival before the risks of disapproved, variant growth. An odd fact for insertion here is that the intelligent boy rarely knows he is intelligent. He knows he is often poor at sports, unlucky with girls, and that his mouth frequently gets him in trouble. He learns to live with the first two, and keeps his mouth shut.

Now, because a man's use of his language is about the last remaining index of his place in society—this since the great fortunes are all either dissipated or discreetly hidden, and cars all look alike, and everybody can dress similarly—it began to seem to me that some means ought to be introduced to enable these men to bring their language facility up to their known intelligence. I cast about—groped is still the word—for some such means. A language laboratory? Reading aloud before a coach? *Something* must be waiting undiscovered.

I had about settled on a kind of combination of both when I discussed the problem with Professor Roger Petersen, who teaches experimental psychology at Washington College in Chestertown, and who has been blind since birth. (Here comes the second pratfall, and surely not the last.) He said, "Whitehill, for an intelligent man, you sure can be stupid at times." That had a familiar ring. "If you're going to have these men reading aloud onto tapes, why in plain hell not have them record books for the blind?"

How simple. . . . But how invisible! We went to the director of Patuxent Institution and got his approval to install there a duplex recording studio, so designed that a monitor can listen to an inmate read aloud, catch his errors, back him up and start him over again. The studio is now in full operation. At the mo-

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ment there stands a waiting list of fifty inmates wanting to audition for the program. With the possible exception of hunger strikes and riots and things like that, *no* fifty inmates of any place have ever done anything in concert.

A punctuation mark—not a period but a comma—to the recording project for the blind is this: We learned, after our independent invention of the idea, that a small group of inmates of the Massachusetts Correctional Institution at South Walpole has been running such a program for years. (Shades of Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace!) We immediately asked for an invitation to visit there to learn what we could about planning, equipment and coordination. In a wild spirit of what-the-hell, I asked the director of Patuxent Institution to let us take along two of his inmates—the two men who would head the program in Patuxent —for the three-day trip to South Walpole. As astonishing as a rose in the snow, the permission came at once.

The trip, in all its fun and consequences, is another story. Because I tend to panic immediately in traffic situations involving more than one car besides my own, I used David Hall, a twelve-year veteran of Patuxent, for my navigator. Nearing the Walpole installation, I met a torn-up superhighway intersection presided over by an elderly policeman. Having circled the wreckage three times and found no way out—not even the way I'd come in—I stopped beside the policeman. Rather, he had watched my Skinner box failure and stopped *us*. David Hall handed him the map, and showed him where we were and where we wanted to be. The policeman held the map upside down. This was too much for David. With an insouciance hard to believe in a con of his experience, he asked sweetly, "What's the matter? Didn't they teach you map reading in cop school?"

The rest of the trip was similar in fun, but none of us—my wife, Professor Petersen and his wife, and the two men of Patuxent —ever forgot for a moment that we all were pioneers. To be permitted to take two felons across five states on an errand unrelated to any court order was, we felt, the headiest of refreshment.

Now we come to the end—the end of the moment. Our grop-

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ing and fumbling has led us toward some sort of distant light. We have established the triangular symbiosis among the blind, the articulate inmate, and the high-intelligence citizen outside both those prisons who feels inadequately used. What do we know by now?

First, we know a little bit about what is wrong. We know that fixed time sentences for criminals have neither deterrent nor rehabilitative effect. (In eighteenth-century England, when picking pockets was a capital offense, most pockets were picked at public hangings. If the State Highway Department were run on the same principles that the prison system is, we would all still be driving about on cobblestones.)

We know that the *lex talionis* of the Old Testament was wisely refuted by Jesus Christ. We believe, O Lord, but You sure take Your own sweet time in helping us in our unbelief.

We know that the longer a man spends in prison, the less likely is he to rejoin what for some of us is a highly interesting and various society; he rejoins a highly interesting and various contrasociety—and ends up back in the joint.

We know that, besides *out*, the man inside wants, more than anything else but sex, communication with people in square society who are getting away with having fun.

We know that recidivism now stands at sixty to seventy-five percent—a success average that would get any businessman fired in a week.

We know that the proper use of a prison is to detain persons who have committed acts that are called crimes, but which really are mere acts of self-identification of persons needing help. We know that the full battery of psychological diagnostic tests ought to be administered to every entrant.

We know that every sentence, for whatever crime, must be indeterminate; those who can go back quickly ought to be got out as quickly as possible; those whose offenses may be minor but who show the pathology of danger to themselves or others must be detained indefinitely.

We believe that a reduction in recidivism from seventy-five percent to, say, fifteen percent is possible, with a concomitant reduction in street crime.

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Last of all, we know that those other things we know all stem from this: Every person taken into custody must be attached as soon as possible to someone of similar makeup on the outside, someone who has a job and perhaps a family and certainly some fun out of life—someone who will demonstrate not by precept but by example that there is a vast congeries of ways of doing things that do not attract the attention of the men in blue.

And we know from that that this office cannot be official. You cannot hire someone to be human.

Our new President said more than he meant to when he said that government cannot do it all. Truthfully, government cannot do anything at all important. It can make war and defend special interests . . . . but any of my pathologues can say the same of himself. Government cannot love, and it cannot care.

I thus foresee a time not too far off when taxes are taken not only in money but also in personal involvement.

Else we perish.

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Borges on Borges

RICHARD STERN

Reality favors symmetries and slight anachronisms . . .
Borges, "The South"

The foolish cement pavilion on Chicago's Midway is The Center for Continuing Education. (What most continually educates is the Industrial Conference.) Off the low-browed, submarine-dim corridors of the bottom level is the University of Chicago's Radio and Television Office. Here came Borges, slender, frail, his walk a bit askew, arm on that of a guide. His face is thin and long, the length emphasized by vertical grooves in the cheek flesh. A physically unforceful person, but with a gift for gesture and pose. Shaking hands, he draws close, his popped, muddled, gray-blue eyes inches from the shaker's face. "I make out lights and shadows." A gentle man who quickly touches the heart.

As Proust says of kings that they are *always* remarkable for simplicity, so fine writers who have been long praised are *always* egalitarian with younger colleagues. And when they are physically fragile, they develop Chaplinesque ways of charming the sting from that belligerence all noted men encounter. (Those who've seen the tiny Sartre scurrying about to offer and light cigarettes, pay for drinks and sit smilingly alert while gallons of stupidity and vituperation inundate him have seen a master example.)

The night before, Borges had talked to a delighted audience about Whitman. A kindly speech, apparently recollected instead of read or improvised, somewhat soft and overextended, effulgent of Hispanic charm. The best of it was his memory of reading Whitman as a student in Geneva, "taking him like a cure." That remembered Whitman, the personality of *Leaves of Grass,* was "divine," a permanent presence like Quixote and Hamlet, a totally different being from the seedy Brooklyn newspaperman shuttling to Manhattan on the ferry.

Borges and I sit across from each other at a small table in the little recording studio, microphone dangled just above our noses. I apologize for my ignorance of Spanish, South America, the literature and customs of Hispanic culture. He replies that he will outdo me in ignorance. The control man signals, and here is much of what was recorded.

STERN: Last night you were talking of a multiplicity of Whitmans. Looking through your poems and stories, one sees at least a number of Borgeses. Sometimes, as in the charming "Borges and I," you have written about this.

BORGES: I suppose we all are in a sense Dr. Jekylls and Mr. Hydes, any amount of Jekylls and any amount of Hydes, and a lot of others thrown in between.

STERN: For some years now, you have become a man-to-be-interviewed, a man who comments on Borges, or what Borges has done. Have you discovered perhaps a new Borges, a Borges in a sense created out of responses to attention?

BORGES: I hope I have, because when I

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was a young man I expected no one to read my stuff. So, of course, I could be as baroque as I liked. I used to write in a very farfetched and stilted style. But now I've got to think of my readers and so, of course, that makes for good literary manners. All sorts of writers act in a different way. They try to be obscure and they generally succeed. Well, I have done my best to be clear and understandable and I think—so it is said—I have succeeded. Now I'm going to begin writing as soon as I get back to Buenos Aires, my home town, a book of straightforward short stories rather after the manner of Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*. Not the last stories he wrote, those are very complex, very involved and very sad, also. I shall try to tell in a very straightforward way, plain stories. So I will try to get away from mazes, mirrors, from daggers, from tigers, because all those things now have become a bit of a bore to me. I will try to write a book so good that nobody will think I've written it. That's my aim.

STERN: Will the hills that these tales come from be, as they were for Kipling, remembered ones? With remembered people?

BORGES: Yes, they will be. I intend to go back to my childhood, because I think a writer should avoid contemporary subjects. If I set out to describe a particular cafe in a particular quarter of Buenos Aires, then people will find that I'm making all sorts of mistakes, while if I write about what happened in a northern or southern slum of Buenos Aires some sixty years ago, nobody will care or remember. And that leaves me a little literary elbow room. I can dream at my ease, I can imagine things. I don't have to go into details. I don't have to become a historian or a newspaperman. I can just dream away. If the facts are essentially true, I don't have to worry about the circumstances. So my intention is to publish a book of some ten or fifteen short stories—let's say stories seven or eight pages long. And all of them will be quite clear. I've written one already.

STERN: At some time in your life, perhaps the notion came to you that these tales, stories and poems were not only worked-out reveries but something committed to paper by an act. Although you say you expected no one to read your stuff . . .

BORGES: There were both these facts. Of course, what was important was the fact that they were reveries or they were daydreams. The fight of putting them onto paper gave me some trouble and lots of fun, also. I remember when I was writing a rather grim story . . . I felt quite happy, because a writer should feel happy when he writes.

STERN: When he writes well, or thinks so.

BORGES: I wonder if one can speak about writing well. But at my age I know my possibilities. I know I can't write things that are far better or far worse than the things I've already written. So I let myself go. I mean, at my age—I'm sixty-eight—I suppose I've really found my own voice, my own stand.

STERN: Yet you talk of writing in another way.

BORGES: Yes. I mean I want to write simple things, but at the same time, of course, I'm a writer. I can't get away from myself; I wish I could. Of course, I'm tied down to my past.

STERN: You don't like the notion of art as an expression of personality.

BORGES: I wrote a story once, a kind of parable about a man who began a very large picture, and therein was a kind of map, for example, hills, horses, streams, fishes, and woods and towers and men and all sorts of things. And then when the last moment came, when the day of his death came, he found that he had been making a picture of himself. That is the case with most writers. We are supposed to be writing about different things. But really what is left at the end is our memory. I mean, what the reader finds at the end is our face, our features, although we are quite unaware of it. So this means that we can't run away from ourselves. But we don't have to try to —a search goes on in ourselves all the time.

STERN: You remember the Henry James story of the figure in the carpet. You have another version of this somewhere. In a footnote, I think. You talk about the divine mind that adds up every gesture a man

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makes in his life and discerns its form with the same ease that lets us see three lines as a triangle. From sixty-eight years, fifty of writing stories and poems, what do you see in the relation between the writer's figure in the carpet and this life figure?

BORGES: One can hardly speak about those things. Every time I write I try to forget myself and to concentrate on the subject. Then I also think of the reader. I try to make the thing clear for him. What I've found out is that really I've been writing the same stuff over and over again. For example, I wrote a poem to a Saxon poet. I was thinking of the author of *The Wanderer*. Then a year afterward I wrote a sonnet on the same subject without knowing it. And, thinking of stories of mine, I thought of two stories as quite different. And then a critic found out that although the setting was different, although it happened in different countries, the story was essentially the same.

STERN: This is what may be meant by a Borges created by a critic's awareness.

BORGES: I think that in my case what I really know are my own limitations. I mean, I know that there are certain things that I cannot attempt. For example, I thought I had evolved a new plot. I told it to one of my friends who said, "Yes, that would be a fine plot, but after all it's the same plot you've already used," and then he mentioned a few stories I had written.

STERN: Do you think that the impulse to say "This is the same" or "I must try something new" is something that a writer living before, say, the Renaissance would have thought about?

BORGES: No, I suppose he wouldn't have thought about that because in those days they had a limited number of subjects. I don't think any knowledge was expected from a writer. And perhaps it was also good, because if you write a story whose plot is known to a reader then that saves you a lot of trouble because the reader knows all about the plot and you can concentrate on the details. In the case of Browning, for example, once he had told the plot in the first book, then he could go on to follow all the interrelations. All the many painters, for example, who have painted the Crucifixion have done the same thing.

STERN: Longinus said that much "modern"—first century—literature was the deformed outgrowth of a search for novelty.

BORGES: What do you think of that? Longinus. Of course, Homer is the primitive writer. But, for example, I have known people who knew the Red Indians in my country and they had no historic consciousness whatever. I remember one of our generals spoke to an Indian chief and he said to him, "How awful it must be for you, how sorrowful to think that once you were the lords of the pampas, and then the white men came and now you are being driven out." And the Indian chief looked at him in amazement and said, "No. Ever since I was a boy I've seen white men." Then I remember that my grandmother told me they had slaves at home, and the slaves were staying with the family that owned them, of course. And I asked her if the slaves had any consciousness, if the slaves knew that their fathers had come from Africa and had been sold in the marketplace. She told me they had no knowledge of it whatever. Historic memory went back to their childhood, they had no notion about their grandfathers and so on, so they never knew they had come from Africa.

STERN: You spoke of your limitations. What are they, as you see them?

BORGES: For example, I would never think of attempting a novel, because I know I would get sick and tired of it before I had written the first chapter. Then I know that I can't attempt descriptions, and I think that psychological analysis is something I should avoid, because I can't do it. But if I can imagine a person, I think I would try to show what is going on in his mind through his acts. That's what happens in the Norse sagas. You are never told anything about what the character is thinking, but you find it out by his sayings or still better by his acts.

STERN: You've not felt an impulse to keep going, to keep on with characters, to show them in relationship to other characters?

BORGES: I had no special interest in that kind of novel. And my friends tell me that

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there's something very childish about me because I'm very interested in plots and an intelligent man is supposed to have no use for plots. Of course, some people enjoy novels where very little happens, where the characters are being idealized all the time; that's the kind of book I would hardly read.

STERN: Stravinsky was asked last year what new thing had come into literature in recent years. He said he never would have guessed that people could make so much of so little. He was praising Beckett and . . .

BORGES: But was it real praise?

STERN: My version sounds ironic, but his wasn't.

BORGES: I had a different experience, but still it's very enchanting. Let me tell it to you. I remember reading a history of Argentine literature by Ricardo Rojas. When I looked over that book, eight volumes and perhaps utter nothingness behind the volumes, I thought how intelligent this man must be in order to have written this book and got away with it. He's written this book and in spite of this, he's famous, he's respected.

STERN: The elephant mustn't let the ant write his epitaph. Shall we talk about brevity as a determinant of other artistic elements? We seldom talk of the consequences of such things as brevity. Your tales and poems, as I know them, are brief.

BORGES: This is caused, of course, by laziness.

STERN: That may be its source, although I doubt it, since forty or fifty volumes testify at least to some form of energy.

BORGES: When I say laziness, I mean the task of taking a pen and writing. Of course, I don't think I'm lazy at thinking or dreaming. Writing's a kind of activity between thinking and dreaming. You have a dream at the outset and then somehow you have to pin it down.

STERN: Is there a kind of symmetry or absolutism that comes with brevity? I've noticed, looking through your pages, this kind of thing: You say, "Everybody made such and such a choice," or "No one dissented."

BORGES: Well, if I understand you, you mean that brevity makes for fairness.

STERN: No, I think not. Brevity makes for a kind of—

BORGES: Sweeping statements.

STERN: Yes.

BORGES: Yes, because if you're writing in a brief way and you interlard that with "so I think," or "perhaps," or "maybe," or "it is not impossible," it waters down and weakens what you're saying. So all that kind of thing is left to the reader. You simply give him a possible explanation of things or a statement that seems just possible to you, and the reader, of course, has to turn it over in his mind.

STERN: One of the beauties of your stories and poems is the clash between this—let's say—absoluteness, and the enigmatic essence.

BORGES: I'll allow myself a confession. The confession is this: Whenever I write a story I know that I have to work in some details, because people expect to be told, for example, what kind of flowers will be found, for example, in that particular kind of ground. Those details are required not by the naturalists but by the realists. Now when I've written a story, I generally ask my mother, "Now this happens in a tenement house. What kind of flowers would we have?" Or, "This happens in a *quinta* near Buenos Aires fifty years ago, what kind of flowers did they have?" And then my mother gives me full realistic details and I work them in. And then I go to somebody else, because I'm very absentminded and hardly notice such things. So when I write my stories there are practically no details and everything happens in the abstract. Well, if I know the reader may feel put out, or perhaps he feels that he's floating about, then I give him a few details, but those are supplied by my family.

STERN: Well, one feels confidence in barely furnished stories; one isn't being swindled by decor. But then your stories are full of this odd tension, or whatever it is, between the peculiar surety and the irreducible strangeness. Perhaps that is the Borges one wants to disinter from the various Borgeses.

BORGES: Well, you see, I'm not really a thinker. I'm a literary man and I have done

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my best to use the literary possibilities of philosophy. I'm not a philosopher myself, except in the sense of being very much puzzled with the world and with my own life. When people ask me, for example, if I really believe that the cosmic process will go on and will repeat itself, I feel that I have nothing at all to do with that. I have tried to apply the aesthetic possibilities, let's say, of the transmutation of souls, or the fourth dimension, to literature to see what could be evolved from them. But really I would not think of myself as a thinker or philosopher, and I follow no particular school.

STERN: Yet certain philosophic filings are drawn to your magnet and not others.

BORGES: Well, that merely means I have my limits. I can be interested in certain subjects and not in others. For example, I've spent most of my life puzzling over time, the problem of time and, of course, my own identity. At least, they go together, because I feel that time is the stuff that I'm made of. But, really, I have no particular theory about time. I have only felt it.

STERN: Someone told me—or I read—that one of your favorite Borges stories is "The South."

BORGES: I think it's the best story because, in any case, it's the most complex. It can be read in two ways. You may read it in a straightforward way, and you may think that those things happen to a hero. Then, you may think there's a kind of moral behind it—the idea that he loved the south and in the end the south destroyed him. But there's another possibility, the possibility of the second half of the story which is hallucination. When the man is killed, he's not really killed. He died in the hospital, and although that was a dream, a kind of wishful thinking, that was the kind of death he would have liked to have—in the Pampas with a knife in his hand—being stabbed to death. That was what he was looking forward to all the time. So I've written that story in order that it would be read both ways. Of course, I was thinking of Henry James.

STERN: I know a bit of your relationship to Argentinian ancestors who figured with San Martín and others, and that in your home there were swords on the walls . . .

BORGES: I've always felt a kind of wistfulness for epic. I think, for example, that my grandfather was killed in a battle, that my great-grandfather fought the Spaniards, that another of my great-grandfathers fought the Brazilians, another fought the Red Indians. I think they had a fine destiny, but, at the same time, perhaps they were not as aware of their destiny as I am, because they just went through it. But I am more aware of the epic significance of those destinies than they were, because they wanted to do their job and one of their jobs was to fight and be killed. That was all in a day's work.

STERN: So many of us praise what we feel we aren't.

BORGES: Even if we think of the things we lack—I mean, if you're a healthy man you don't think about health. If a woman loves you, you think of something else. You're happy, but you don't have to worry about it. At the same time, when you write about any particular unhappiness that has come to you, you're in a sense liberating yourself. Even if it is a confession. For example, if I tell you something in confidence, at the moment I'm telling you the things, I am not there as the actual person, because in the very act of telling it, I'm somebody else. I'm somebody who can look at things from a distance, who can put it into words, who can tell it to somebody else.

STERN: But here, in "The South," there's this praise of a kind of honor that . . .

BORGES: Some sixty years ago in my country it was very important for a man to be brave or to be considered brave. I mean, for a man to be a coward was a shame. I have known that feeling even, for example, among hoodlums, among very poor people. They were very ignorant, very limited men, and yet they all felt that to be a coward was the one unforgivable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost. I have known, for example, the case of men defying a man they had never seen before simply because they were sure that he was a brave man who was very handy with his knife. They wanted to find out who was a better man, so they

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would seek him out and sometimes get killed for their pains simply because of—what? "I'm as good a man as he is. If he's better than I am, then let him prove it." Nowadays, of course, all that has completely vanished in my country. Nobody cares about being brave. People care about being rich or about being notorious, what people are talking about, and that sort of thing.

I have thought of writing a story about a man who is defied, who refuses a challenge, but he can do that because he knows he's not afraid. I thought of writing a story about a man who is just a common hoodlum, and then suddenly he sees through the utter vanity of being brave, trying to live up to a reputation. Then he's a coward, people mock at him. Well, if he knows in his heart that he's not afraid, he can take it. Of course, that's a very difficult story to write because the whole thing has to happen in his mind, unless, of course, there were two stories, unless you were told the facts at first and then in the end you might find out that the coward was really a brave man, because he knew that he wasn't afraid.

STERN: I suppose the writers who count for us most offer us the pleasure of realistic choices.

BORGES: I always get rather angry at those who speak of reality on one side and of literature on the other, as though literature were not a part of reality. If you read a book, it's as much of an experience as if you had traveled, or if you were jilted. As for my stories, I have tried to be loyal to them. I never write anything until I can fully imagine it as possible. I'm not out for novelty or for astounding people. When I write something, it's because I know that I can really think about it. For example, if any of my characters say anything, then it's because I feel that those are the words they might have said. I try not to work in any other matter. I've been an enemy of the Communists, of the Nazis, of our dictator when we had him, but I never let those opinions interfere with my work. When I'm writing a story or a poem, I'm not thinking of my opinions but of the possible implications of what I write. I try to be loyal, try to draw the thing as I see it, that's all. I don't think of a writer's opinions as really very valuable. For example, in the case of Kipling . . . I greatly admire Kipling. I don't think we have to worry about his political opinions.

STERN: The stories frequently contradict his directly expressed opinions.

BORGES: Yes, in the case of Kipling, it's really remarkable. For example, in *Kim,* the finest characters are natives, and he was quite unaware of that, because he was all the time speaking of the white man's burden and so on, and yet the English characters are not very good.

STERN: They tear themselves apart in those hills where they don't belong.

BORGES: I wonder if Kipling knew that? He must have felt it. I wonder if we see him as he was? I think of Kipling as a really great writer.

STERN: Joyce said that the three great talents of the nineteenth century were Tolstoi, Kipling and—can you guess?

BORGES: No.

STERN: D'Annunzio.

BORGES: That's a comedown.

STERN: I haven't read enough to say.

BORGES: I've read very little D'Annunzio, and the very fact that I've read very little of him is my judgment of him. Tolstoi, Kipling and D'Annunzio. I wonder how you can admire all three. Joyce had a very catholic mind.

STERN: Well, they all had immense energy; all were mad for straight stories. Once again, it's praising what one isn't.

BORGES: Well, I admire Tolstoi, of course, but D'Annunzio, I find him so bombastic. I think if a man has moral defects, they always find their way into his work. So I think if we write in purple patches all the time, it's a sin of vanity, and that sin should hardly be forgiven. I think a writer should be able to write in a plain way, because if he's trying to impress a reader all the time, the reader, of course, finds it out and then he refuses to be impressed.

STERN: Do you think there is any good writing that comes from personal defect? Rage? Meanness?

BORGES: I wonder. Rage, of course. Now in the case of Oscar Wilde, for example—

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after all, he was writing purple patches all the time—but you feel that this was fun. That he wasn't taking them too seriously. There was also an Oscar Wilde who wrote *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

STERN: I suppose a life like Wilde's, in which one must always disguise and then always make something of one's disguises . . .

BORGES: Yes, but through the disguises, I think, a very level character.

STERN: And brave. You feel a man who disguises himself all the time must be a coward, but in Wilde's case you feel, "Ah, there's real bravery."

BORGES: You remember what Chesterton wrote about Oscar Wilde. He had to sum him up in a page in one of the University Library books. Then he wrote a very fine book, *The Victorian Age in Literature*. And the book is full of epigrams, but they all make good points, and when he comes to Oscar Wilde, he sums him up with these words, "Wilde was an Irish fighter." A thing that nobody ever thought of saying about Wilde. He says that he showed that in his trial and that all during his life he had been fighting really, fighting public opinion and at the same time getting hold of it. But the case of D'Annunzio I think is different because the purple patches one feels have been written without a smile, where in the case of Wilde you feel that he was smiling all the time or maybe laughing at what he was doing. It was a kind of joke.

STERN: You think D'Annunzio was emotionally simple or emotionally corrupt?

BORGES: I suppose both, but emotionally simple, I should say. I think Italians are clever, but I don't think they're very subtle. I don't speak of all of them, but in my time I have found Italians practical men, all very cocksure of themselves and, of course, theatrical.

STERN: After this last World War, there's been a great deal of marvelously direct Italian art in movies and books. Mussolini may have used up an extra decade's quota of bombast.

BORGES: Well, I will make a last confession. I don't like Italian films. Whereas *Psycho* was a very fine film. I had a discussion with an Argentine critic. He told me the whole thing was a parody, that the whole thing was meant as a joke. I said, "Well, all love is a joke." But it's not being taken as a joke. It's a nightmare really. I suppose that comes from Jekyll and Hyde because they're the same essentially . . .

The tape ran out here. We continued talking at the table for half an hour or so. "It's not something for the machine," said Borges, "but conversation, *une tranche de vie*." We drank coffee from paper cups and he spoke of the screenplay he was writing with Bioy Casares and someone else, *Invasion*, the story of six lazy types who somehow succeed in repelling one. He'd written a couple of others over the years but nothing had come of them.

We put on overcoats and went out. A gray day, halfway to snow. He wanted to walk back to the Quadrangle Club where his wife was waiting. He talked of the difficulties of life in Argentina, the tiny salary he made as director of the National Library and professor of English and American literature ("You have to do it all in a semester"). "Less than a street-cleaner." Argentinians didn't think of themselves as South Americans. "Brazil is South America. You know, exotic, Indian, Negro."

"And Argentina? Buenos Aires?"

A laugh, the long, gentle head scooping up toward mine. "A sort of Paris. Yes, where everything is derived, the Teatro Colon from the Opera, the skyscrapers from, from Chicago. Everything imitation." He'd had troubles there under Perón. His mother was put under house arrest, his sister in prison, "a jail for prostitutes to increase the humiliation. It was a way of getting at me. She wrote that she was fine. That made me worry." He had the boyish directness that is the New World charm, gentler and more melancholy in its southern version. On the other hand, there was the strength of bravery and good heart in it.

At the Club he did not want to be helped up the stairs; he'd found ways of getting his bearings. He said good-bye with that intimate courtesy that makes some farewells oddly sweet and painful.

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A Legend Revisited: Elinor Wylie

JOHN D. GORDAN

"She was a legend before she was a fact," Carl Van Doren wrote of Elinor Wylie after her death on December 15, 1928. Legends have a way of disappearing even from the scandal sheets of the national press that once made so free with her name. Changes in literary fashion have taken all but one of her four mannered novels out of print and obscured the power and beauty of the last of her four volumes of poetry, *Angels and Earthly Creatures*. The facts of her life, from which her poetry grew, were only imperfectly established in her sole biography, *The Portrait of an Unknown Lady*, 1935, by her younger sister, the novelist, Nancy Hoyt. Yet her story has the fascination of classical tragedy, and a reexamination of literary values will inevitably bring her work back to public attention.

The legend of Elinor Wylie is recorded in the work and in the reminiscenses of her friends and enemies, eminent figures of the 1920's. She is sympathetically delineated by Kathleen Coyle in *Immortal Ease* as Victoria Rising and by Isa Glenn in *East of Eden* as Eva Littlefeld. Nancy Hoyt treated her frivolously as Athene in *Bright Intervals* and Anne Parrish maliciously as Christable Caine in *All Kneeling*. She described herself with a detachment remarkable for her temperament in a long poem wittily entitled "Portrait in Black Paint, with a Very Sparing Use of Whitewash." To her memory Edna St. Vincent Millay, ever her champion, dedicated *Fatal Interview* in 1931.

The quality allowed her in varying degrees by both admirers and detractors is beauty. Kathleen Norris, the American novelist, who was a hostile witness, admitted that had it not been for "an expression of faint discontent about her mouth and a restless use of the eyes that were always looking for something else," Elinor Wylie "might have been quite beautiful, with her colorless clear-cut face, superb dark eyes that were framed by a great mop of curled dark hair. . . ." Edith Olivier, the English novelist, recalled in "Concerning Elinor Wylie" her first vivid impression of the poet: "She was wearing a dress made of stiff, shiny silk, and it looked like frozen green water. She was tall . . . holding herself very erect, with a smooth evenness of carriage. . . . Her face was heart-shaped, and very white, and the copper-colored hair curved nobly away from the sides of her forehead."

Miss Olivier's description implies the distinction of person that her admirers have also commented on, a grace of personality that she retained when gracelessness was widely fashionable. She loved elegant clothes, which she bought in Paris when she could afford them. She felt at her best in a silver dress created for her by a dressmaker famous in the 1920's, Paul Poiret. She had a passion for silver in clothes, in jewelry, in household furnishings. Wherever she lived, she contrived an aristocratic

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atmosphere of taste, of refinement. Frank Crowninshield, editor of *Vanity Fair,* pointed out that she liked "to pretend she was a Bohemian but the sham was at all times apparent." Her third husband, the poet William Rose Benét, wrote after her death: "The fastidiousness that Elinor Wylie brought to her art was reflected in every worldly possession and in every gesture of her life."

The great exception to this well-nigh universal admission is Virginia Woolf's description of the poet in a letter to Vita Sackville-West:

> Oh what an evening! I expected a ravishing and diaphanous dragon fly, a woman who had spirited away four husbands. . . . a Siren; a green and sweet voiced nymph—that was what I expected, and came a tiptoe into the room to find—a solid hunk: a hatchet minded, cadaverous, acid voiced, bare boned, spavined, patriotic nasal, thick legged American. All the evening she declaimed unimpeachable truths; and discussed our sales: hers are three times better than mine, naturally; till, thank God, she began a-heaving on her chair and made a move as if to go, gracefully yielded to, but not, I beg you to believe, solicited, on our parts. Figure my woe, on the stairs, when she murmured, "It's the other thing I want. Comes of trying to have children. May I go in there?" So she retired to the W.C., emerged refreshed; sent away her cab, and stayed another hour, hacking us to pieces. But I must read *The Venetian Glass Nephew.*

Not only was Elinor Wylie generally acknowledged to be a beauty; many considered her a genius. In *Three Worlds* Carl Van Doren coupled her beauty and genius. Doubly endowed, she was "doubly driven. She was one of the most arresting women of this or any age." Benét unequivocally called her a "genius." Others, like Edmund Wilson, were ready to concede the extraordinary variety of her intellectual gifts. She was a poet and a novelist, with a scholar's energy and thoroughness in research. "Like many women who have suffered, she had her moments of serious unbalance," Mary Colum recorded in *Life and the Dream,* "but what really stood to her was her industry at her work and the discipline that came with it. She had made herself . . . an intellectual and a scholar."

Some of the spell of Elinor Wylie's personality lay in her talk, which brought into play the power and charm of her unusual mind. She had had the example and tutelage of Horace Wylie, who was, she once declared, "the most fascinating conversationalist" she ever knew. Burton Rascoe, the critic and editor, who allowed her "genius," found her conversation more suggestive of the eighteenth century she loved than of twentieth-century New York. "Her talk . . . had both style and wit," Edmund Wilson remembered.

Such gifts are rarely unaccompanied by vanity, which friend and foe alike found pervasive in Elinor Wylie's character. "She was one of the most beautiful women I have ever known and the vainest," Louis Untermeyer stated candidly in *From Another World.* "She was vain about the merit for which she was least responsible, her physical beauty." Edith Olivier called her "the most egotistical person I ever knew. . . . She enjoyed nothing more than a serious discussion of her own personal appearance." Even her admirer Carl Van Doren confessed that it was "boring . . . she could never bear being less than first in any company." Mary Colum deplored "the vanity she could never conceal or camouflage. . . . If she was not overtly considered the most important and beautiful person in every gathering, she suffered and showed her suffering openly." Yet Rebecca West gave a charitable explanation: ". . . . much that struck the superficial observer as egotism was an unbridled passion for perfection too thorough-going to exempt herself from praise or blame."

Her vanity, unhappily, produced what the admiring James Branch Cabell described in *As I Remember It* as a "touchiness beyond instant belief, alike as to her writings, every least line of them, and her personal loveliness also. . . . From her associates she required continuous flattery." Cabell recalled that although he had been "loud-lunged in praise of her first two romances," he had found *The Orphan Angel* "impenetrable." Thereupon Elinor Wylie, as he put it, "dropped his acquaint-

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ance." This touchiness, also commented on by the Colums and Edmund Wilson, led to public scenes. Once, Carl Van Doren recollected, feeling herself neglected at an evening party at Theodore Dreiser's, she forced her friends to follow her into another room to listen to her recite some of her poetry. Once she left Kathleen Norris' dinner table and "flung herself upon a bed, raging because some innocent guest had observed that G. B. Stern was the most important woman writer of the day."

According to Carl Van Vechten in *Fragments from an Unwritten Autobiography,* she was

> a warm, generous person but friendship with her had to be on her own terms. . . . She was a great writer and a great beauty: nothing less would do. . . . At the slightest sign of rebellion . . . Elinor would dissolve into tears. Vanity asks for flattery, in fact demands it, and her whole life and career, amorous, artistic and commercial, was based on flattery, an attention she exacted in exchange for her friendship and confidence. It was not difficult to give her. She was handsome, if not beautiful, and what she did in writing she did superlatively.

Even Benét, describing Elinor as Sylvia in *The Dust Which Is God,* admitted somewhat unpoetically: "Sylvia . . . could be difficult as hell sometimes/but never (by her values) a pain in the neck/although upon occasion a corruscation of lightning a sudden blinding thunderbolt."

The most unfavorable view of her personality in print was taken by Kathleen Norris, the novelist and sister of the first Mrs. William Rose Benét. The principal source of her dislike seems to have been that Elinor Wylie was a bad stepmother to Teresa Benét's three children, who did ultimately go to live on the West Coast with their Norris relatives. Mrs. Norris was impatient with Elinor, who, after breaking up two families by her elopement with Horace Wylie, insisted upon her love of children and was "endlessly argumentative" about the legality and morality of her three marriages "even in Catholic eyes."

> Nobody was worrying about these points or even discussing them, but she could not leave them alone. . . . We all make curious mistakes in self-analysis, but hers was tragic; trying to reconcile her actual character and her destiny with what she wanted and hoped them to be, and yet knew they were not, kept her spirit in a state of continual unrest. . . . In fact, despite beauty, brains, youth, with a talent close to genius, and fame, she was troublesome. Three men—one might say men of distinction—had married her—and many others had indicated their admiration in unmistakable terms, but "dissatisfied" was the word that inevitably was fitted to her, and everyone who knew her wondered what on earth she wanted.

Kathleen Norris was not alone in her reading of Elinor Wylie's face. Edmund Wilson noticed her discontent and rebellion. The English novelist Rose Macaulay, meeting her in the late 1920's, described her as "the most unhappy looking woman [she] had ever seen." They all may have overlooked the effect of poor vision on her expression: she should have worn the spectacles her vanity would not permit.

To offset her vanity Elinor Wylie possessed what her admirers considered a rare degree of courage. "She worshipped courage," Benét declared. "She herself had suffered deeply, and still suffered proudly from early recklessness." The sufferings exacted a physical as well as a spiritual toll. During the last fifteen years of her life she endured what he referred to as "almost constant physical pain" from high blood pressure, essential hypertension and hemocranial headaches. Her physician for her last five years, Dr. Connie Guion, remembers her endurance and humor in the face of pain. Padraic and Mary Colum were both impressed by her bravery, "physical as well as spiritual." In Mrs. Colum's words, Elinor Wylie had "learned a great deal from living," including "a despair which seemed to be another name for courage and combat." She could meet anguish of body and mind, heart and spirit with "a fine, steely courage." The opposite point of view was dispassionately expressed by Sara Teasdale: "She seemed heroic if you liked her, hysterical if you didn't."

Upon a few Elinor Wylie made a really sinister impression. Padraic Colum, who admired her appearance and her literary gifts, thought her a "dangerous" person of

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whom to make a friend. She was too mercurial to be trusted. A friend of the Benét family described her as "the only evil person" she ever knew. Both sources recollect unpleasantly her whim of sending Benét, who just before the marriage was staying with his parents, a telegram breaking their engagement—with the sole intention of shocking his mother.

Behind the legend lie the facts that made Elinor Hoyt Hichborn Wylie Benét the woman she was. The first Hoyt settled in Massachusetts in 1629 and her branch of the family—from whom she inherited what she called "the johnny-cake" or country folk side of her character—lived in Pennsylvania from the late eighteenth century. Her grandfather Henry Martyn Hoyt, raised to farm life, was a brigadier general in the Civil War, a judge, and governor of Pennsylvania. Her father, also Henry Martyn Hoyt, was in the class of 1878 at Yale. After success at the Pennsylvania bar he received federal appointments as assistant attorney general in 1897 and as solicitor general in 1903. In 1883 he married Anne McMichael and had five children, of whom the eldest, born September 7, 1885, was christened Elinor Morton.

The McMichaels were of Irish descent. The child's great-great-grandfather had worked on the estate of Joseph Bonaparte in Bordentown, New Jersey. Her great-grandfather rose to be a lawyer, politician and man of letters in Philadelphia, editing the *Saturday Evening Post* and the *North American Review*. Her grandfather went into banking and amassed a sizable fortune.

Elinor Hoyt was especially close to the men among her progenitors. She was devoted to her grandfather McMichael, who took her to Europe in 1903 to show her the great world. She felt a passionate admiration for her father, who is remembered as an attractive, warm-hearted and intelligent man by a childhood friend of Elinor's, who recalls Mrs. Hoyt as a psychosomatic invalid much addicted to the sofa. She could do little with her children and, according to Mary Colum, contributed to the vanity of her eldest by calling attention to the beautiful hair of her "lion child"—an expression that stuck in Hoyt phraseology. During some unfortunate family incident, she exclaimed, "I have given birth to a generation of vipers!" Unstable they certainly were: one son and one daughter killed themselves and another son survived jumping off a liner in mid-Atlantic.

As a girl Elinor Hoyt had the experiences that went with her social, financial and political connections in Philadelphia and Washington. She went to the Baldwin School, to Bryn Mawr, and to Holton Arms in the capital. She spent her summers on Mount Desert, with noticeable effect on the imagery of her poetry. She was always a great reader. She "wrote"; she studied drawing and painting. At eighteen she made her debut and for a bluestocking was much admired. She had, according to Nancy Hoyt, an unsuccessful love affair with a suitable young man. It may have induced—in 1903-1904—the first of the four periods in her life when she was absorbed in writing poetry. It may be the fact behind the story that she married Hichborn in 1905 on the rebound.

Philip Simmons Hichborn was almost exactly three years his wife's senior. His father had risen from shipwright's apprentice to rear admiral in the Construction Corps. The boy was in the class of 1905 at Harvard, where he belonged to the right clubs and the *Lampoon*. He wrote sporting stories of some competence, published in *Hoof Beats* by a Boston vanity press in 1912, and romances of which Elinor was the heroine. Hichborn was described by his sister-in-law as a "nice-looking and well-born young suitor with a bad temper."

From the beginning the marriage seems to have been unhappy, and Elinor remained dependent upon her family, especially upon her father. The birth of a son, Philip III, on September 22, 1907, did not strengthen the relationship of the young Hichborns. Then in 1910 a series of psychological blows brought the marriage down. On May 1, 1910, Admiral Hichborn died, followed on November 20 by Mr. Hoyt. Elinor Hichborn lost the support of the relationship with an older man that seems always to have been essential to her

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emotional well-being. On December 16 she eloped with Horace Wylie, some sixteen years her senior.

In fact, Wylie may have been seventeen years older than Elinor: according to conflicting Yale records, he was born on September 16, 1868 or more likely 1869. His father was Judge Andrew Wylie of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. Horace Wylie was an editor of the Yale *Record* and a member of the Class of 1889. He took his degree at the Harvard University Law School in 1892 and was admitted to the bar of the District of Columbia the same year. The Wylies were wealthy: the family fortune was estimated at a million dollars. The young man was able to go around the world in 1894 before his marriage on April 30, 1895, to Katherine Virginia Hopkins, daughter of James H. Hopkins, a member of the House of Representatives from Pittsburgh. By 1910 they had had six children, two of whom died in infancy. Wylie was described by the newspapers as "handsome . . . full faced, broad shouldered, diffident in manner and extremely courteous and affable." The gossip columns chattered that before Elinor there had been another young woman for whom he had left Mrs. Wylie but that after a month he had returned to his wife, who "served notice that never again would she stand for such an escapade."

Mary Colum's impression of him, derived from Elinor, emphasizes in a negative way the need and preference for older men that mark the poet's emotional relationships. But she adds, "From what I have heard of him from others, Horace Wylie was neither so interesting, so brilliant nor such a man of the world as Elinor believed him to be; she was highly impressed by people, men or women, whom she believed to be *du monde,* and delighted in the phrase 'persons of quality.' " Mrs. Colum believed that Elinor's romantic notions of Horace were nearer the truth than the deprecating description of him that he was "dull and uninteresting" or that he "had the mind of a suburban realtor."

News of the elopement broke in the press on December 22, and from that moment on Elinor was never free from the sting of notoriety. A few sentences quoted from several issues of *Town Topics,* a defunct scandal sheet, illustrate the persecution to which she was to be subjected:

> Intimates of the Hichborn family know that since Mrs. Hichborn's father died about two months ago, she has not been at all the same. . . . She seemed to take a dislike to society and frequently denied herself to her most intimate friends. Those who saw her in the last few weeks declare that she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. . . . It has become known that Philip Hichborn and his wife did not get along together, as she was high-spirited and fun-loving, while he was inclined to be studious and rather silent at most times. The matrimonial breach between them was widened a good deal last Summer say some of their friends, and it is told by women who were there that after an unusually heavy row the young wife vowed that she would make away with herself in the lake.

The pair went to England in the winter of 1911. In April Elinor sent Horace back to Mrs. Wylie for a five-months' trial reconciliation to prove that the elopement was more than an "escapade." Perhaps Elinor knew of the earlier episode in Horace Wylie's life and needed reassurance. While she remained with her mother, Horace and Katherine Wylie and the four children left at the end of May on a long trip to Europe. The Hichborn ladies made Philip Hichborn, who was willing to take back his errant wife, according to a statement he later released to the press, wait six months before doing so. The newspapers erupted with rumors that Elinor had been jilted and had had a complete breakdown. Then on September 26, 1911, Elinor and Horace abandoned their families a second and last time and joined each other. Wylie settled two-thirds of his estate—estimated at $300,000—on his wife and children.

For almost five years Mrs. Wylie refused to divorce her husband. On January 6, 1912, however, Philip Hichborn, the abandoned husband, brought action in the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia naming Horace as corespondent. But before the petition was heard Hichborn, aged twenty-nine, blew his brains out on

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March 27, 1912, at the house of his sister, Mrs. Paul Pearsall. He left a note attributing to ill health this violent solution to all mortal problems, but the general belief was that grief caused by the loss of his wife was the reason. Elinor seems to have felt her responsibility: she never ceased trying to convince herself and her friends that the elopement had had nothing to do with the suicide because the bullet was fired eighteen months later. Mrs. Pearsall adopted young Philip, her nephew, then some four and a half years old, and it was probably for the custody of the boy that the divorce of the dead man was pushed through to the end.

Until July, 1916, Elinor Hichborn and Horace Wylie lived in England as Mr. and Mrs. Waring. Elinor was extremely anxious to have children, regardless of their legal status, and suffered more than one miscarriage. Early in their life together, in 1910-1912, she became absorbed a second time in writing poetry, perhaps stimulated by her feeling for Horace. Her slight first volume of verses, *Incidental Numbers,* was privately printed in London in 1912 at Horace Wylie's expense.

The Warings lived more or less pseudonymously in many different places in England, with visits to the Continent. The First World War introduced the need for identification papers, which put an official end to the fiction of the Warings. Fortunately for them, Mrs. Wylie, to obtain custody of her children, petitioned for divorce early in July, 1916. Horace and Elinor returned to Boston where they were married on August 7, 1916, almost six years after their first elopement.

Their official marriage lasted some months longer than six years. Elinor Wylie's petition for divorce from Horace Wylie on grounds of nonsupport was provisionally granted in Rhode Island on March 26, 1923—the next day was the eleventh anniversary of Philip Hichborn's death—and confirmed on October 1, 1923. During their six years of marriage they lived together in Boston, on Mount Desert, in Augusta, Georgia, and in Washington. Horace Wylie was no longer affluent and took a traveling position with the Interstate Commerce Commission at some $100 a month. Elinor began writing again in 1918 poetry of a far more mature and finished quality than any she had yet achieved, poetry that she was to bring rapidly to an extraordinary technical perfection. This third period of poetic activity lasted until 1924—the half-dozen years that were also marked by her resumption of the legal position of a married woman and the disintegration of her marriage with Horace Wylie. Elinor never discussed the reasons for the change even with so close a friend as Carl Van Doren. Horace Wylie is reported to have counseled: "You had better remain with me, Elinor. You are a fantastic creature and I understand you." But in 1921 Elinor settled in New York at 1 University Place, then one of the old houses facing the Square, and saw her first published collection of poems, *Nets to Catch the Wind,* achieve a wide critical success. Although Horace Wylie was no longer necessary to her, she never ceased to use him as a standard and to seek in other men the qualities which she admired in him.

In May, 1927, she wrote to him from London:

Dearest Horace,

A strange thing is going to happen to you, for that thing is going to come true which undoubtedly you once desired, & for which you will now not care a straw. I am going to admit to you that I wish with all my heart I had never left you. I don't want you to keep this letter, & I hope—& trust—that you will tell no one, but although the admission may afford us both a certain pain, it is founded upon such deep principles of truth & affection that I feel it should be made.

You must not tell this, because the knowledge of it would give pain to Bill, who is one of the best people who ever lived & with whom I expect to pass the remainder of my days. But you & I know that that remainder is not long, & the entire past—which is so much longer—makes me wish to tell you the truth.

I love you, Horace, with an unchanged love which is far more than friendship, & which will certainly persist until my death. It is impossible for me to tell your present sentiments towards me, but it can hardly be a matter for regret

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that your former devotion should have bred a devotion in me which nothing could destroy. . . .

Well, my dear, do not think I am divorcing Bill or something like that. He is the best boy imaginable. I suppose it is, in a way, churlish to write this. But I loved you first, I loved you more, I loved him afterwards, but now, that I love you both, I love you best. Surely you must, in some way, be glad to know this.

Mary Colum believed that Horace Wylie dominated her taste to the very end of her life. He survived her until December 28, 1950, when he died of a stroke in Washington, leaving a widow whose maiden name had been Eleanor Taylor.

In 1920, Elinor Wylie had renewed her friendship with the man who was to become her third husband. William Rose Benét had been a close friend of her brother Henry Hoyt in the Class of 1907 at Yale. Her brother, an artist of considerable talent, had been left by his wife after the war, and Benét had lost his wife in the flu epidemic in January, 1919. Henry Hoyt had been the closest to Elinor of her own generation in her family and, like Philip Hichborn, he was to kill himself, certainly in part over the failure of his marriage. He shared a studio apartment in New York with Benét and died more or less in Benét's arms in August, 1920, at the age of thirty-three. The tragedy had thrown Elinor and Benét together, and he, five months her junior, had quickly fallen in love.

Benét immediately recognized the extraordinary quality of her poetry and encouraged her to treat her gift with high seriousness. Their relationship deepened over the preparation of her second collection of poems, *Black Armour,* published by George H. Doran in the spring of 1923, and of her first novel, *Jennifer Lorn,* which Doran published that autumn. Colonel and Mrs. James W. Benét, the groom's parents, were greatly distressed by the impending marriage. The Colonel even went to Europe in order to be excused from attending the ceremony.

Elinor Wylie and Benét were married on October 5, 1923, four days after her divorce became final. They were both professional writers, he the less successful of the two. During their married life of five years Benét produced three books—poems, essays and a children's story—and Elinor three novels—*The Venetian Glass Nephew* in 1925, *The Orphan Angel* in 1926 and *Mr. Hodge and Mr. Hazard* in 1928—and two collections of poetry, *Trivial Breath* also in 1928, and *Angels and Earthly Creatures,* posthumously published in 1929. This rounds out her extraordinary record of four novels and four volumes of verse in eight years, to say nothing of the other poems published long after her death in *Collected Poems,* 1932, and *Last Poems,* 1943, and the "Fugitive" pieces in the *Collected Prose,* 1933. At the beginning of their marriage they were hard up, despite the continuation of the allowance that Elinor had received from her mother for about a decade. Her health, furthermore, had been uncertain for the same length of time but she refused to take care of herself. She longed for children and never ceased to feel guilty over having abandoned her son. "I left my baby when I ran away. That is the only thing I have ever done that I can think was bad," she admitted to Carl Van Doren. "And now I would rather have a child that I could think of as really my own than anything else I could really have." She did not see Philip, her son, from 1910 to 1918 and after that only intermittently, although they are reported to have had a natural attraction toward each other. In her marriage with Benét the history of miscarriages was repeated. Only a few months before her death she wrote him: "It is, and always will be, the greatest tragedy and complete frustration of my life that I am childless."

From 1922-1925, she went to the MacDowell Colony at Peterborough, New Hampshire, to obtain the repose that enabled her to produce her amazing output. In the summer of 1926 she made her first trip alone to England. Her inherited love of England had been fostered during her life there with Horace Wylie. Since she was a girl, her attendant spirit had been an English poet, Shelley, and her relationship with him had seemed so real, so compensa-

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tory for her emotional failures, that in the opinion of Carl Van Doren it actually interfered with her feelings for living men. Now she made new friends and through one friendship she experienced the emotion that led to the writing of her finest poetry. This friend was the man to whom she dedicated *Angels and Earthly Creatures: A Sequence of Sonnets,* as these great sonnets of love and renunciation were originally called when privately printed at Henley in 1928, and later "One Person" when they were included in the posthumous volume *Angels and Earthly Creatures.* This collection contained the work of her fourth and final period of poetic activity in 1927-28 under the impetus of a new love. William Rose Benét has left a slightly disguised version of this relationship in *The Dust Which Is God.* The most factual accounts of it can be found in the reminiscences of Carl Van Doren and Mary Colum.

When Elinor first read the sonnets to Van Doren in London in the summer of 1928, she told him that she had met a man

> whom at last she loved absolutely. . . . She had never been in love before, she was sure. She had only been loved. . . . Little enough had actually come of it. Jealous circumstances had kept the lovers apart. . . . Little enough could ever come of it. She would not disrupt her life again. This must remain a radiant experience of the mind. But it did not belong solely to her mind. It was flesh, too, and it tore at her. She cried out against the cruel separation. "I don't want much. I don't expect it. I could be satisfied if I could know that sometime, maybe when we are very old, we could spend the night under one roof. It would not have to be together. Only under the same roof, peacefully."

Her description of the new beloved did not impress Van Doren, although the intensity of her emotion did: "To me, she did not make him sound glorious, though she tried. All the glory was in her." The only expression of their love was apparently in the sonnets. "This final love had come to her like first love," Van Doren observed, and in the sonnets "the heart of sixteen spoke with the tongue of forty."

Only two days before her death in New York Elinor showed Mary Colum, who had first heard the sonnets the previous night, a snapshot of the man who had inspired them—

> a tallish-looking, obviously middle-aged man [Mrs. Colum observed]. That she was really in love with this man I believe to be true and real as far as romantic love is reality. . . . "I am not taking anything on this time," she said, and these are her words precisely. "He calls to see me once a week, and we talk, (a great deal about philosophy), and sometimes walk together". . . . As she spoke to me of it, it seemed a simple and rather pathetic relationship where two people with obligations to others were attracted to each other in a romantic and intellectual way. Elinor seemed to be attached to his family and spoke of them with affection.

Mary Colum provides further evidence that in this new love Elinor turned to someone who, like Horace Wylie, represented to her the older man, provider of stability and strength like her adored father.

> As she showed me his photograph she said, "I think he is like Horace Wylie—You would have liked Horace." I began to think that maybe it was all somehow the continuation of the thread of her life with Horace Wylie . . . her life in the English country once more . . . the visits to London . . . the old life she had once told me about relived again almost as in a dream.

Although many have spoken of this man in print, no one so far has given him a name. In the Benét correspondence at Yale, however, is evidence of his identity that is corroborated by details in *The Dust Which Is God* and in Nancy Hoyt's biography of her sister. Elinor met Henry de Clifford Woodhouse of Rockylane Farm, Rotherfield Greys, Oxfordshire, near Henley-on-Thames, his wife Becky and their children on her visit to England in 1926. Her feeling for Woodhouse reached full flower in the summer of 1928, when she spent much time in Henley at the Old Cottage, and the flowering can be found in the love sonnets and the metaphysical poems in *Angels and Earthly Creatures.*

At the Woodhouses' Elinor experienced her first stroke, when she thought she had merely fainted and fallen down nine steps. She forced herself to rise, despite the pain

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in her back, and joined the others in the garden because she felt that Mrs. Woodhouse thought her "spoiled and even cowardly." She made little of the fall and the Woodhouses let her go back to London on the train alone. It proved an agonizing journey. She had "dislocated and injured a vertebra half way down her spine" and had fractured the end of her spine.

Apparently Elinor did not tell Benét of her new absorption until he joined her in England in the middle of the summer of 1928. He, too, met the Woodhouses, of whom he naturally took a mixed view. He expressed his own resentment by bitterly singling out what he considered their callousness about her accident. Yet he tried to give his rival his due. "I liked the man as a casual acquaintance—aside from the present situation," he wrote Elinor on his way back to New York early in September. If Elinor found goodness in Cliff, he would not deny it. "As to matters of the heart," he conceded, "what you perceive you perceive and I have never known you to perceive goodness and be at fault." He was apparently convinced that the love was unconsummated and he felt that the very demand for self-sacrifice caught Elinor's imagination. He wrote her from the *Homeric:* "Your heart is supremely governed—it was notably so in my case—by your pity, your maternal feeling, your desire for a romantic abnegation. . . . This appeal to your sympathy seems to me, frankly, to have been rather blatant and weak." He generously admitted, "I am sure he loves you. So does this wretched Bill." "I hope to live with you," he insisted, "so long as you still wish to live with me."

Benét would hardly have been human if he had never—even by implication—compared Woodhouse adversely to himself. "Only," he pointed out, "when I heard the object of extravagant abasement in immortal sonnets, ejaculate 'What does it mean?' blankly of a simple ballad, and say nothing at all to one of the greatest mystical poems of our time delivered with the true poetic frenzy,—I can but ponder again on the frequent occurrence in life of the love of the star for the void." Nancy Hoyt, too, who had ample opportunity to meet Woodhouse at Henley and who mentions him, but not by name, deprecated Elinor's enthusiasms and "shining lights. For they were usually just quite ordinary every-day people on whom the beam of her wild unbounded admiration would fall. . . . Elinor had no illusions about the mental attainments of her pets; it was that they were different from other mortals, of finer clay, even when they were a little bit stupid."

The autumn of 1928 seems to have brought some estrangement between Elinor and Woodhouse. Shortly after Benét left England she referred to the Woodhouses in a letter to him as "a pair of heavy cotton blankets soaked in bilge-water." Possibly her vanity had been wounded because Woodhouse accepted her abnegation too willingly. By early October the wound was apparently healing. "I am *glad,* awfully *glad,*" Benét wrote her, "if Woodlice have proved human." Nancy Hoyt insisted that a few days before her death Elinor told her "about her waning admiration for a gentleman in England. . . ." In the first letter of condolence which Becky Woodhouse wrote on December 20, 1928, an estrangement is implied by her protestation: "Surely you can no longer doubt that we loved her, Bill."

From this difficult situation Becky Woodhouse emerges as one of those remarkable women with an understanding heart and a generous mind, and Cliff comes out with credit. On January 30, 1929, Mrs. Woodhouse wrote Benét again. "I think that in this last book is to be found the finest flower of all her work. I think, dear Bill, that she guessed—or I hope she did—that I understood—for her real gift to me at Christmas was an exquisitely bound copy of the sonnets." A few days later Woodhouse wrote Benét a letter that helps to explain Elinor's feeling for him. "I know that Elinor loved us both very much indeed and I also know that she attributed to me qualities which I don't possess and only wish that I did. Her imagination, I think, ran away with her. . . . Dear old man Bill, know that I feel it a great honour to have shared

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some of the great affection your Elinor had for you."

Many years later in 1962 Mrs. Woodhouse confirmed her feelings about Elinor to the present author:

> You obviously do not know what an effort it cost me to let you come here. . . . I am not attempting to dramatize a situation which is hackneyed enough. But I *do* want you to understand just why I want to shut the door again and to recapture something of the peace of mind and understanding we've reached in old age. . . . In all fairness to Cliff I must add that Elinor did pursue him relentlessly and would not take NO.

When Elinor returned to New York in early December, 1928, she planned to return to England in mid-January, 1929, in order to be in the same country as Woodhouse, she told Mary Colum. She did not know that she had suffered a second stroke in October, 1928. It had affected her face and had been diagnosed as Bell's paralysis. She wanted to see Benét, with whom she stayed in their apartment at 36 West 9th Street, and prepare the copy for the publication of *Angels and Earthly Creatures* by Knopf. The task was completely finished on December 15. The next day was the eighteenth anniversary of her elopement with Horace Wylie. It was also the day of her death. She suffered a third and fatal stroke.

The dramatic account that Benét gives in *The Dust Which Is God* is undoubtedly accurate. He heard her call out for a glass of water and took it into the room where he had left her reading the sermons of John Donne. He saw her standing by her chair and starting to move toward him. "What is it?" he asked and she replied, "I don't—know," and fell at his feet. She never regained consciousness.

Permission to publish from unpublished letters was graciously granted by Mrs. Barnet Rubinstein, Elinor Wylie's niece, Mrs. J. Crawford Ware, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry de Clifford Woodhouse, and Mr. Leonard Woolf; and by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University and the Berg Collection of The New York Public Library.

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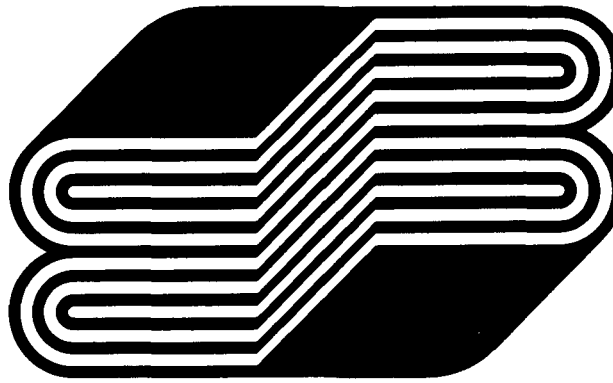

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Stover at the Barricades

MICHAEL J. HALBERSTAM

Certainly we all know *Stover at Yale.* That's the one where he makes the touchdown against Harvard on the final play. Or is it the one where he hits the home run against Princeton in the last inning? Or maybe it's the one where he gets turned down by Skull and Bones and comes back to Yale ten years later and everyone says he was really the best man in the class, after all?

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Unlike most overlooked or forgotten classics—which are usually overlooked or forgotten for very good reasons indeed—*Stover* has had a healthy life in exile. My library copy here in Washington has been taken out at monthly intervals since 1942, and a recent paperback edition with a foreword by Yale President Kingman Brewster has been issued by Macmillan.* John Humperdink ("Dink") Stover still epitomizes the clear-eyed college man of the early 1900's, enough so that he is the hero of a current advertising series by a Boston newspaper. Everyone recognizes the name, but almost no *adults,* even recent Yale graduates of unquestioned fervor, read it today.

Part of the lack of serious evaluation of *Stover* comes from its position as a "college novel." College novels, of course, are read by high school and prep school youth. Thus the teen-agers of forty years ago must have read the novel and been oblivious to its social criticism, while today's youth, who might revel in its view of American society, would never come close to picking up such an artifact.

Stover, too, is damned through its association with other college fiction of the turn of the century, fiction that today still smells of hearty pipe tobacco, manly tweeds, and the unexamined life. Owen Wister's *Philosophy Four,* a brief, engaging novel published in 1903, is a fine example of this. Wister celebrates the college years as an occasion for good food, good wine, good company, and last-minute cramming for exams. With his offhand anti-Semitism, genuine love for the pastoral scenes still surrounding Cambridge, and amused distaste for scholarship, Wister gives us a real feeling for turn-of-the-century Harvard. We know what kind of charming young men inhabited those baroque dormitories, long since turned into administrative offices where now a half dozen secretaries labor in

✪ MICHAEL J. HALBERSTAM has written articles on medical care and other subjects for *The New York Times Magazine* and various journals. Dr. Halberstam is a clinical associate in medicine at George Washington University Medical School.

* *Stover at Yale.* By Owen Johnson. Collier Books. $1.50.

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what was once a sophomore's sitting room.

Charles Flandrau's *Harvard Episodes* confirms this picture, although with a touch of bitterness lacking in Wister. Flandrau's undergraduates, desperately seeking popularity and social acceptance, find that the college is dominated by a social order imposed by the rich of New York and Boston. They resent this, but eventually learn to live with it as a part of growing up. Ideally they would substitute for it a social order based on good cheer, good looks, athletic ability, and class spirit; the world of ideas or the outside world itself never enters into their conception of manliness.

Even George Weller's brilliant *Not to Eat, Not for Love* (1933) fails to concern itself with what a college education is all about. Weller shows us Harvard changing from what was basically an advanced Eastern finishing school with a few intellectual students and professors to a great intellectual factory with a few finishing school students still caught in its gears. Weller's students are not boys, but young men. They are questioning, cynical, amused and amusing, but they are exactly like Flandrau's tennis-flanneled youngsters in not caring about what they are taught, why, or by whom.

Stover superficially fits this mold. Who could have been a nicer, more decent, more brainless young man than the Dink Stover whom Owen Johnson had featured in the Lawrenceville Stories? These short stories, written for the *Saturday Evening Post* between 1909 and 1911, were pure cotton candy, filled with practical jokes, ludicrous nicknames, gallant goal line stands, tutor-baiting, and other such schoolboy nonsense. Like the English boys' magazines, they apparently gave middle-class America a vicarious brush with upper-class mores, although Johnson never grossly emphasized the wealth or family background of his prep school heroes. It was enough, perhaps, that they went to Lawrenceville at a time when only a minority of Americans entered high school.

If he had followed his Lawrenceville habits, Stover at Yale would indeed have been the vacuous athlete that most of us half remember. He *would* have won the game in the final seconds, lied to save a friend, played some merry pranks, stopped a runaway horse or two, and married the dean's lovely daughter. Johnson brings him up to New Haven in this spirit, quivering in anticipation of "Four glorious years, good times, good fellows, and a free and open fight to be among the leaders and leave a name on the roll of fame."

Immediately on arrival Stover is plucked out of a maelstrom of eager freshmen by a worldly sophomore named Hugh Le Baron, who proceeds to give Dink some advice about ". . . the system. It has its faults. But it's the best system there is and it makes Yale what it is today." Le Baron has all the traits that readers of the Lawrenceville stories will recognize as Johnson's beau ideal—he is "erect and well mannered," is a varsity football player, and in his "clean-cut features and naturally modulated voice there was a certain finely aristocratic quality that won rather than provoked." As much as any man, he is the villain of *Stover at Yale*.

For on one level *Stover*'s theme is that of a rebellion of underclassmen, led by Dink, against the mores of their elders. A coterie of prep school graduates organized into exclusive sophomore societies traditionally controlled all freshman and sophomore class offices, electing its candidates over a divided, poorly organized majority. These successful candidates were then passed along to higher positions in the junior year and thus became strong candidates for the holy of holies, Skull and Bones. This is the "system" that Le Baron explains to Stover, and one that Stover initially accepts as natural and desirable. One votes for one's friends, both out of loyalty and because one's friends are the best of Yale.

Stover, however, turns out to be the prototype of the innocent, decent young man who becomes radicalized by his companions. He is drawn to Regan, a gruff, older freshman, working his way through Yale in order to go into reform politics back West. He comes to respect Gimbel, a classmate who is politicking to overthrow the sophomore societies. (Johnson hints that Gimbel

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may be Jewish—despite being an Andover athlete he has no chance of making a society—but never uses the word.) He makes a condescending visit to a couple of grinds from a small New England town and finds a respect for Yale and for learning unknown among his own carefree friends. Gradually as a sophomore Dink realizes, "I've been nothing but material—varsity material—society material; I've lost all the imagination I had and I know less than when I came here." He spends more and more time in the company of social undesirables and is finally bluntly warned by Le Baron that he is ruining his chances for a Secret Society by his taste for unconventional companions. Outraged by Le Baron's attempt to pick his friends, Stover tosses back the membership ring of the society to which they both belong and refuses to apologize to the powerful Le Baron. All hope for Bones now gone, Stover embarks on a period of epic dissipation and drunkenness, falling so far as to associate with a "group of hard livers from the Law School."

Eventually, however, Dink pulls himself together and forms a discussion group among his classmates, an attempt to know "what American manhood means in the towns of Georgia and Texas, in the little manufacturing cities of New England, in the great West, and in the small homes of the great cities." Through the force of his own personality and his reputation as an athlete (he is a star end, although only one football game is described in the book, and in that Yale loses badly to Princeton), Stover pulls the disparate elements in his class together.

Owen Johnson, who was himself a proper New Yorker, was obviously skeptical about the effect of Yale on what he considered to be the natural democracy of young people. Nevertheless, he considered it possible of reform. On a more serious plane, however, he sees little hope for the college in its main task of education. In the book Johnson speaks in the person of Brockhurst, a sardonic, long-haired classmate of Stover's. Brockhurst is a writer, turning out essays and poems not to earn himself the chairmanship of the literary magazine, but because he likes to write. Stover finds this barely believable . . .

"You're hitting up a good pace on that Lit competition," said Dink, unconscious of the tone of patronage into which he insensibly fell.

"Pretty good."

"That's right. Keep plugging away."

"Why?" said Brockhurst, with a little aggressiveness.

"Why, you ought to make the chairmanship," said Dink, surprised.

"Why should I?"

"Don't you want to?"

"There are other things I want more."

"What?"

"To go through here as my own master, and do myself some good."

Poor Dink! No sooner does he overcome one dragon than another springs up in his path. Unlike Le Baron, Brockhurst is given all Johnson's best lines, and Johnson was a very good writer indeed. He shreds decent Dink, mocks all his values, and walks away untouched. He lets Stover know that what he intends to do with college life is not struggle in some sort of competition to gain Class honor (still the deep pulse of Yale life through the 1950's), but to "loaf."

"Why, Stover, here are four years such as we'll never get again—four years to revel in; and what do you fellows do? Slave as you'll never slave again. Why, you're working harder than a clerk supporting a family!"

"It's a good training."

"For a certain type, yes, but a rather low type. Thank you, I prefer to go my own way, to work out my own ideas."

Brockhurst does more than compare the dauntless Dink Stover to a ribbon clerk or to complain about the competitive, utilitarian attitude of those few Yale men who bothered about their studies. In a cynical, bitter outburst before Dink's discussion group, he characterizes American universities as "admirably organized instruments for the prevention of learning." He turns on Swazey, one of the small-town grinds befriended by Dink and one genuinely interested in his education, and starts to quiz him. What does he know of impressionist painting? Has he heard of Manet? What

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about Bach's influence in musicology? Has anyone in the room heard of Renan, Turgenev, Daudet, Björnson, Hauptmann, Sudermann, Strindberg? Strindberg! Does anyone know anything about Tolstoi other than that "He's a very old man with a long white beard, who lives among his peasants, has some very odd ideas, and has started to die three or four times. The papers have told you that."

Brockhurst goes on to demand information about socialism, the labor movement in Germany, separation of church and state in France. Silence. He tells his friends, those loyal followers of Dink Stover, "You have no general knowledge, no intellectual interests, you haven't even opinions, and at the end of four years of *education* you will march up and be handed a degree—Bachelor of Arts! Magnificent! And we Americans have a sense of humor . . . We are business colleges, and the business of our machines is to stamp out so many businessmen a year, running at full speed and in competition with the latest devices in Cambridge and Princeton."

Brockhurst's tirade is greeted in shocked admiration. Where did Brockhurst ever hear of Strindberg? Where, in fact, did Owen Johnson ever hear of Strindberg? His father* was a publisher, true enough, but he didn't publish dirty books. No matter. It is enough that Brockhurst confronts the most studious of Stover's classmates and demolishes their pretense of learning. And, along with theirs, Yale's.

Yet an even more somber note echoes through *Stover at Yale*. Johnson clearly loved his young men and, particularly, he loved the Greek virtues of scholarship and sport. Few writers have so well caught the dreamlike quality of frenzied athletes struggling in a losing cause. Johnson loved sport, and I think he must have loved football—Stover loved football, but on the tackling practice field as a freshman he "suddenly felt the inflaming seriousness of Yale, the spirit that animated the field. Everything was in deadly earnest; the thing of rags swinging grotesquely was as important as the tackle that on the championship field stood between victory and defeat." Dink by this time is already disillusioned by "the nervous struggle for position" that dominated Yale social life. Listening to Le Baron's well-meant advice, Stover felt something inside him snap, "something fragile —the unconscious, simple democracy of boyhood. And, as it went, it went forever. This was the world rushing in, dividing the hosts."

That simple democracy of boyhood could not be recaptured even on the football field. Even there, where the kind of aristocracy of endeavor that Yale glorified then and for many years was in full command, where the rough boy from the western village or the Negro from Hillhouse High could become captain of the team, something demoralizing was at work. And Johnson names it. Those very qualities that made his countrymen most proud of the United States, those very virtues that every Lawrenceville boy learned to love, frightened and repelled Dink Stover. For when Stover beats out a bigger, stronger upperclassman for a place on the first team, he cannot enjoy his success, the triumph of hard work, and dedication and spirit.

> It was not play with the zest he loved, it was a struggle of ambitions with all the heartache that lay underneath. He had gone out to play and suddenly found himself in a school for character, enchained to the discipline of the Caesars, where the test lay in stoicism and the victory was built on the broken hopes of a comrade.
>
> For the first time, a little appalled, he felt the weight of the seriousness, the deadly seriousness of the American spirit which seizes on everything that is competition and transforms it, with the fanaticism of its race, for success.†

Goodby Horatio Alger, glad to meet you Mr. Twain. It is not Stover who is flawed, it is not merely Yale that is imperfect, it

* Robert Underwood Johnson (1853-1937), associate editor and eventually editor of the rather conservative *Century* magazine, also noted as a crusader for copyright laws and for conservation, competitor for General Grant's memoirs with Samuel Clemens.

† This is the correct punctuation. The meaning is not changed appreciably if the last two commas are omitted.

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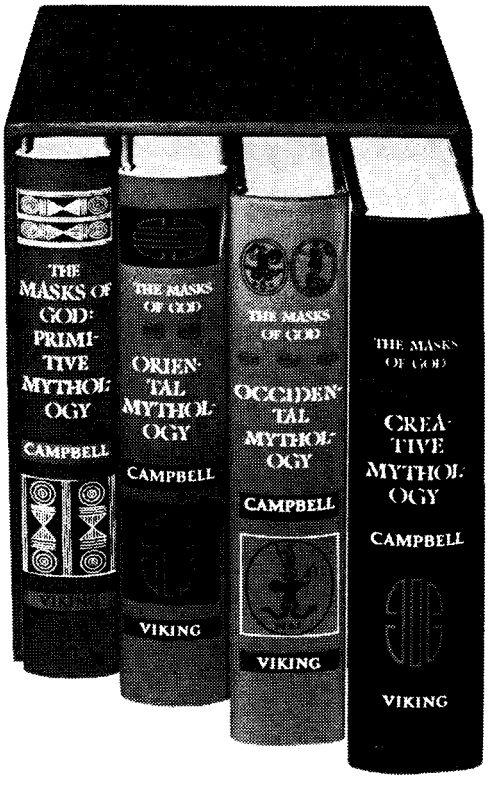

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is America itself, and it is most vulnerable where it thinks itself most worthy. Johnson comes back to this theme again and again. Brockhurst tells his horrified classmates,

"The great fault of the American nation, which is the fault of republics, is the reduction of everything to the average. Our universities are simply the expression of the forces operating outside. We are business colleges purely and simply, because as a nation we have only one ideal—the business ideal."

Reproached for lack of college spirit, Brockhurst is the ultimate in contempt. He lacks the New Frontier ethic.

"Work for Yale! Work for Princeton . . . Of all the drivel preached to young Americans, that is the worst. I came to Yale for an education. I pay for it—good pay. I ask, first and last, what is Yale going to do for me?"

No doubt about it, *Stover* is a subversive book. The mysterious thing about it, however, is how its subversion came to be glossed over, ignored, and finally forgotten. True, at the end Dink and The System come to a meeting of the ways, but only after the evils of that system have been bitterly described. In Pierson's authoritative history of Yale, *Stover* is mentioned only in passing. According to *Twentieth Century Authors,* the book did create some stir among Yale alumni when it first appeared, but this soon died out. Stover is rarely accorded a mention in histories of American intellectual (or anti-intellectual) development.

Even Kingman Brewster in his introduction to the current paperback edition slightly, but significantly, misses the mark. Although he quotes Brockhurst's closing speech, Brewster sees the book as essentially an "identity crisis" experienced by Stover, as if Stover were an earlier Holden Caulfield. But there is no conflict between what Yale teaches Stover and what his parents taught him—his parents and their values are never once mentioned in the book. It is not particularly Stover who is in crisis, but Yale, and beyond that America itself. But Stover is so genuinely decent, so manly in a long-lost way, that even today we focus on him and not the institutions around him. The messages of *Stover*—and they are real ones—continue to be obscured by the charm of its main character. But if we in the academic world are up against the wall these days, we should look over our shoulders and note that the handwriting has been there a good long time.

Rabbits in a Strange Wood

SCOTTSBORO: A Tragedy of the American South. *By Dan T. Carter. Louisiana State University Press. $10.*

Reviewed by MURIEL RUKEYSER

In the dramas that become the tragic and famous cases of entire ages, specters and figures of speech in after-times, the Scottsboro Case, with its lost boys, its lost women, is one of the most evocative. That train with the fight and capture that took place goes, as Kay Boyle wrote in a poem to Nancy Cunard,

. . . running wild through a country. . . .
Not the old or the young on it, nor people
with any difference in their color or shape,
Not girls or men, Negroes or white, but people
with this in common:
People that no one had use for, had nothing to
give to, no place to offer . . .

The book that has now appeared—thirty-one years later—has set out to gather together, devotedly and modestly, the evidence and stories that met in this case, and knotted in a painful butting against the walls of lives. The accuser, through the first trial, held in Scottsboro, Alabama, in April, 1931, and in all the trials for nineteen years, was the dread that boiled up, as well as the state itself. Nine teen-age Negro boys were accused of raping two young white girls, who were taken off the gravel-carrying gondolas of the train. Ruby Bates and Victoria Price, "wearing men's caps and dressed in overalls," sat under a sweet gum tree and talked to the women at the station. Twenty minutes later, one of them asked

MURIEL RUKEYSER was present at the second Scottsboro trial. Her most recent book, *The Speed of Darkness,* will be followed this year by *The Traces of Thomas Hariot,* for which she did the research as a fellow of the American Council of Learned Societies.

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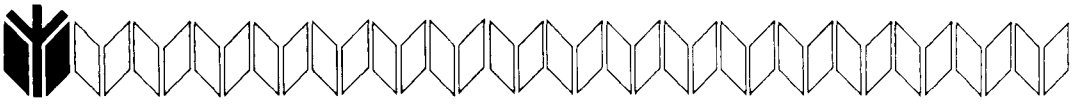

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to see the deputy, after the boys had been loaded into a truck. "It would have taken just a little leading for a wholesale lynching," said a salesman who was traveling through the town.

At the end of the first trial, eight of the boys were sentenced to death in the electric chair; Roy Wright, the ninth, was only thirteen years old. The gathering defense began. Messages arrived from ministers and from the International Labor Defense, which called for a change of venue. This trial had taken place in a setting whose people spoke of "black brutes" and spread the rumor that they had "chewed off one of the breasts" of Ruby Bates. In Chattanooga, the Interdenominational Colored Ministers' Alliance was raising support and money; it had hired the defense for the first trial. The Communist Party issued a statement, and telegrams protesting a "legal lynching" were sent to the governor and to court officials.

Dan T. Carter follows the people and the responses to this case in a book that opens a wide net of life. "The number of participants, their youth, the stunning rapidity of their trials, and most of all, the harsh sentences they received, roused a wave of protest from millions of Americans." Mr. Carter is a historian of deep gifts, brave compassion, and wide architectural methods. *Scottsboro* is based on his dissertation of a year earlier, and acknowledges George Brown Tindall at the University of North Carolina. Beginning with the belief that this story explores the depth of the South's regional culture and with a feeling for the lives of people changed forever by "one morning's ride on an Alabama freight train," the book follows these lives and the huge structures they exposed to all of us who lived aware through that time and that storm.

This is a book of evidence; its material is that of a novel by Camus, Solzhenitsyn. . . . No, some writer deep enough in the attraction and knot of this South so that the generosity, the seduction of the land and the persons can be spoken for at the same time that a newspaper editor can say that Negroes ("and women," he hastily added) had not been "trained for jury duty in our country." That writer would have to be able to give us the scene between that man of personal rectitude and tortured consciousness, Judge Horton, and Dr. Lynch, who privately told him that he did not believe that the girls had been raped.

" 'My God, Doctor, is this whole thing a horrible mistake(?)' asked the stunned Horton. 'Judge, I looked at both the women and told them they were lying, that they knew they had not been raped,' replied the doctor, 'and they just laughed at me.' Shaken by the news, Horton urged the doctor to testify for the state." Dr. Lynch, "with a look of anguish on his face," replied, " '*Judge, God knows I want to, but I* can't.' " The writer who tells this story then has to explain (it is explained in a footnote) that Dr. Lynch was never put on the stand as a witness in this case. And thirty-five and thirty-six years after this, the chief persons, in interviews with Dan Carter, their countryman and fellow Southerner, in agony have told their stories.

The years of trials involved Samuel Leibowitz and Clarence Darrow, Osmond Fraenkel and Arthur Garfield Hays. Both President Roosevelt and Mrs. Roosevelt entered the scene, and the President intervened at one point. The issues fanned out, deepened; they touch our moment.

Not only lynching, frightful deprivation, the right to sit on a jury, the taking of the support in the North as an assault on the South, the definition of intercourse between a black person and a white person as rape, the labeling of all financial support for the "boys" as "Jew money from New York," the lack of understanding on the outside—not only these come into this story, but also the question of education.

The defendants were people of high school and college age; and college students were being urged, and were urging each other, to take the lead in breaking down racial barriers. I came into the scene of the courthouse at Decatur during the second trial out of an ignorance so vast that I was faced with it at once, and that facing changed the course of the rest of my life. It was my first time in the South; I had

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read and listened to what I could, but I went in completely unprepared for either the physical beauty or the violence of that moment. In a distinctive car with New York plates (my father's, loaned to three of us because we were going to drive a broken-down car he did not think would last out the journey, and I insisted on going, with my press card from a student magazine), we went into a deadly charged moment. Among the shattering, forming things I knew in those days, the most important came with the first sight of the Scottsboro Boys. I think I must have moved, at nineteen, with imaginings of heroes: these were boys of my own age and younger, defeated already, broken, hoping, lost, one sick with syphilis and gonorrhea, one blind, one limping. From that moment on, I would move with belief and the drive toward truth without looking for heroes.

In the next moment, we were arrested "for inciting the Negroes to insurrection"; and that was because, in my suitcase, there were copies of a Call to a Conference on Negro Student Problems to be held at Columbia University in that spring of 1933, and signed with many handsome names. Not one copy had been given out: there were no Negro students, no people in Decatur who seemed to be concerned with such, and at the little Carnegie library only whites could go in.

This book will carry, smiting home, tones and overtones of these developments in our people in our own times. To people who have not had the years that the Scottsboro prisoners spent in jails—over one hundred years—standing beside their own years, this brings the stories, the broken phrases, of a first brave account. The digging needs to go further. We follow the black accounts only a little way; we have glimpses only given to us of the ferocious life of the railroad jungles and the towns, the hunted life of the escaped prisoner, the knifeblade life of the cities, the compounded furies in the jails.

But these glimpses, in this book that is an extreme monument to the bravery of a sustained effort to make the truth take effect, as well as to the nightmare of the victim life—these glimpses do come. The fighting homosexuals in prison; the years of strain when the defense seemed never to move; Andy Wright saying, "I am trying all that in my power to be brave, but you understand a person can be brave for a certain length of time and then he is a coward down. That the way it is."

The life when they finally came out, "No difference than prison."

The inflexibility of Alabama officials, due to race hatred, "the old traditional cause," said Andy Wright, "which we all fully understand."

And about Victoria Price, one of the two girls, "I'm not mad because the girl lied about me. If she's still living, I feel sorry for her because I don't guess she sleeps much at night."

And, forgotten by their early friends, "I am just like a rabbit in a strange wood and the dogs is after him and no place to hide." No friends, no family where he came from, "Freedom don't mean a thing to me."

A valuable wide sight over the materials, the people, the suggestion of a following strength that can be opened to the blacks and to the whites, is in Dan Carter's treatment of this history.

Mr. Drucker's Discontinuities

THE AGE OF DISCONTINUITY: Guidelines to Our Changing Society. *By Peter F. Drucker. Harper & Row. $7.95.*

Reviewed by EMMANUEL G. MESTHENE

Both at the very beginning and at the very end of this book the author explicitly disclaims kinship with scholars who attempt to forecast "the year 2000." Nevertheless, he by and large deals with the same subject matter as they do and he says very much the same thing about it. I do not see much point in the disclaimer, therefore, unless it is to deny the usefulness of systematic attempts to forecast a "surprise-free" future as a methodological device for dealing more

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effectively with the inevitable surprises when they do come.

What Mr. Drucker contributes to this common subject matter are some new analyses and fresh viewpoints, but also a good deal that seems to me too general and familiar. The book is very uneven in that respect, as the author appears to be aware, however. Some sections are eloquent, as in the discussions of the nature of work and the functions of education in part four, devoted to "The Knowledge Society." The author effectively counters the common misapprehension that technology eliminates work and concentrates instead on the effect of knowledge on occupations:

> Perhaps its greatest impact lies in changing society from one of predetermined occupations into one of choices for the individual. It is now possible to make one's living . . . doing almost anything one wants to do and plying almost any knowledge. This is something new under the sun. (p. 272)

The author also recognizes that new choices carry implications for education, however, especially for many young people who feel uncertain without the strong guiding hand of tradition:

> The twin problems of adolescence and dropouts indicate that we will have to learn to build school curricula . . . composed of standard units that can be put together to serve individual needs, to satisfy individual aspirations, and to conform to the one fact we really know about growing up: that no two people ever grow up exactly alike. (p. 330)

In the discussion of the history and conditions of economic development in part two, the book carries the conviction that comes with expertise. The major themes are all struck: the importance of technological innovation for economic growth, the need to develop human resources as well as to multiply capital, and the warning that if we fail "we face the specter of international race war" (p. 105). Analysis, evidence and example seem better wedded in the treatment of these themes than they do elsewhere.

There are also many places where the book is marred by ambiguities and oversimplifications, which may be the result of no more than haste, however. I do not imagine that all historians would concur that "history . . . moves in a spiral" (p. 43), for example, or that sociologists would be happy with the flat assertion that "organizations do not exist for their own sake" (p. 189). I also doubt that Professor Galbraith will consider well taken criticism of his *The New Industrial State* as failing to "notice any institution except business" (p. 175n) after the pains he has taken to delineate the emerging partnership between the industrial "technostructure" and the apparatus of the state. I find it ambiguous—if it is not unsupportable—to say that "Government-financed research . . . has been remarkably sterile" (p. 183) when innovative virility is identified exclusively with *patentable* inventions, and I fear it is a bit of sophistry to damn the welfare state as a "fiasco," despite the fact that "not many people would want to do without [its] social services and welfare benefits," because "it promised [and failed] to create a new and happy society . . . [and] to do away with ugliness and envy and strife" (p. 218). We still await the second coming for all that.

The doctrine of "reprivatization" has been associated with the author for some time, and it is again prominent in this book, although the word, surprisingly, is missing from the index. "Reprivatization" is the systematic policy by which government uses "the other, the non-governmental institutions of the society of organizations, for the actual 'doing,' i.e., for performance, operations, executions" (p. 234) of public programs. Nowhere does the author discuss the degree to which such reprivatization has in fact occurred in the American polity in recent years, with the evolution of the government contract and such recent innovations in politico-economic organization as the quasi-public research and development corporation, the "private" company all of whose income is from the federal government, and hybrids such as the Comsat Corporation.

More disappointing in this connection is the author's treatment of the "social re-

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sponsibility of business" (pp. 201-207), which I do not find responsive to the point at issue. The point is that as society becomes more affluent, it requires a decreasing proportion of its available resources to feed, clothe and shelter its population, and has available a correspondingly increasing amount to buy what economists call public goods and services. It is characteristic of such public goods and services that corporations are inadequately motivated to provide them, because the benefits are "external" and therefore not fully appropriable to the firms as return on investment. To argue, then, without elaboration, that "the best way for business and its leaders is to make the satisfaction of a social need an opportunity for a profitable new business" (p. 207) seems to me to beg the question.

I do not want to leave the impression that the book is not rich in sound insights. Among them, I believe, is the author's insistence that both economic theory and political theory are in need of refinement and reformulation if they are to be adequate to contemporary experience. But the analysis is not always fully equal to the insight. For example, there is a controversy in political science these days about whether the imperatives of a highly technological society lead to diminution of the political pluralism that we traditionally associate with American democracy. Some people, like Robert Dahl at Yale, argue that they do not. Others, like Henry Kariel and Peter Bachrach, contend that they do. Mr. Drucker argues a third view, that is, that ours is a new "pluralist society of organization":

> The answer to diversity is not uniformity. The answer is unity. We cannot hope to suppress the diversity of our society. Each of the pluralist institutions is needed. Each discharges a necessary economic task. We cannot, as I have tried to show, suppress the autonomy of these institutions. Their task makes them autonomous whether this is admitted by political rhetoric or not. We therefore have to create a focus of unity. This can only be provided by strong and effective government. (p. 225)

This could serve as a good description of the theory of social justice that we associate with Plato, whom no one has ever construed to have advocated pluralism. Mr. Drucker talks at times of centralized control of subordinate institutions (pp. 234, 250), at times of functional specialization of institutions (p. 185), and at times of geographical "universality" (p. 176). He has not, I think, joined the issue of *political* pluralism in a technological society.

In sum, I am left with the impression that *The Age of Discontinuity* is good enough to have deserved to be better.

Artist and Observer

DAUMIER AND HIS WORLD. *By Howard P. Vincent. Northwestern University Press. $12.50.*

Reviewed by FRANK GETLEIN

Daumier is one of those artists who have been shuttled onto a siding by the express train of art history, but chiefly because the throttle has for so long been in the grip of fanatics. There are two basic reasons for his fate and both have more to do with the blindness of fanaticism than with any inadequacy of Daumier's.

We are, in the visual arts more than elsewhere, thoroughly committed to a carefully paced aesthetic evolution as the structure of art history since Giotto, and Daumier simply cannot be made to fit into any niche of his time, somewhere between the romanticism of Delacroix and the realism of Courbet and Manet or the Impressionism of Monet. He stands completely apart from the fascinating aesthetic battles of the nineteenth century, apparently indifferent to the outcome. If a critic wants to say something nice about Daumier, he notes the recollection of Michelangelo in the drawing. Indeed the recollection is there and is often a strong one, but this is no ground for congratulation. If a strain of bushmen decided to evolve into orangutans, this would be of great interest but hardly an occasion for compliments.

✪ FRANK GETLEIN is a Washington journalist and the author of *The Bite of the Print* and *The Politics of Paranoia.*

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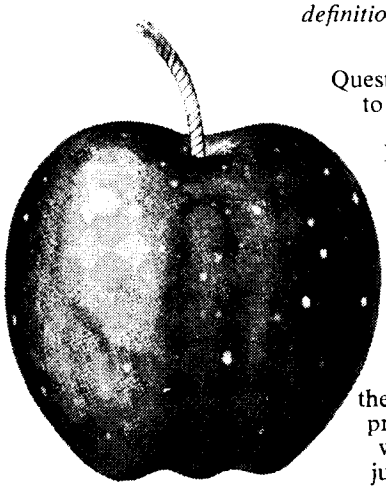

Questions like these require only quick recall to answer. And what they teach is nothing more than intellectual atrophy, say Neil Postman and Charles Weingartner. Dr. Postman, Professor of English Education at New York University, and Dr. Weingartner, Associate Professor of Education at Queens College, are co-authors of a book which "should be required reading for those who make policy for teacher preparation programs."* This is an education book with a difference, and the difference is that its dramatic, practical proposals can be put into effect now. And without new buildings or technologies — just a new viewpoint. $5.95 at bookstores

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Teaching as a Subversive Activity

by Neil Postman & Charles Weingartner

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Thus the artist who took as his motto the laconic line, "One must be of his own time," is guilty of not being of his.

Secondly, of course, there is the embarrassing business of all those lithographs. Daumier not only lacked the wit to get deeply involved with any of the new aesthetic theories that were so plentiful, he spent most of his artistic energy in producing almost four thousand lithographs. Not only were these prints a medium of extreme dubiety before the invention of Pop posters, but they were published in newspapers and concerned with passing events of the political and social scene. Good grief.

Prints have always been somewhat suspect to many art historians and not, it must be admitted, without reason. They began their life, in the fifteenth century, as imitation manuscript illuminations in the imitation manuscripts Gutenberg's backers hoped to palm off on an unsuspecting public. That note of prints as imitation paintings has clung through the color mezzotints of the eighteenth century to the lithographic reproductions of School of Paris painters and of the Pop masters of today. Yet from the very first, an authentic print identity became recognizable; this was enlarged by various hands in various print media. The lithograph was invented ten years before Daumier's birth in 1808, but he is the man who created it as an artistic means and who brought it to a height of achievement not since surpassed.

Literature, in contrast to visual art, has been almost immune to evolutionary theory. Novelists since Joyce are often influenced by him in several ways, but each one is not expected, as painters are, to come up with some further "breakthrough" that can be said to be "beyond" Joyce. Perhaps for this reason, this new critical biography of Daumier by a professor of English at Kent State University is the first-rate job that simply has not been done in art history.

Professor Vincent's work is wholly admirable. He has made original research into documents involving the artist. He has effectively rediscovered Daumier's editor and publisher, Charles Philipon, who is revealed as occupying a much more important place in the Daumier scheme than merely providing the outlet for the prints. Professor Vincent has clarified, probably as far as will ever be done, the previously rather murky situation of Daumier's last years in relation to Corot, Daubigny and the house at Valmondois.

More important than such normal scholarly detective work, Professor Vincent has written a model critical survey of the prints, the paintings and the sculptures. These last began in the ancient tradition of three-dimensional sketches for two-dimensional work, the thirty-six heads—originally thirty-eight, including one never cast in bronze and now the property of the author—of Assembly members and ministers in 1832. These colored clay figures led to individual caricatures and to the master print, the famous "Legislative Belly." Sculpture for Daumier reached its climax in his original invention of Ratapoil, who also came into existence first in clay, only later in the stunning series of lithographs that chronicled the rape of the Second Republic by Louis Napoleon.

This kind of fictional indirection was forced on Daumier by the censorship of the various royalties that captured France in turn during his career. One result was the long series of social sketches, invariably compared to Balzac's novels in their scope and grasp of the churning, bourgeois city throughout the middle third of the century. But both Macaire and Ratapoil were also products of the censorship, the former the distilled essence of the morally bankrupt king who gave his subjects the single command, "Get rich!" the latter the same spirit turned evil and imperial.

Professor Vincent notes the extreme difficulty of appreciating Daumier's paintings as a body of work. They are scattered all over two continents with only the Louvre and the Phillips Collection in Washington having as many as five under one roof. It takes travel, but the travel is worth the effort. Slowly a giant emerges for the traveler, one whose "Uprising" at the Phillips, to cite a random example, makes Delacroix's "Liberty Leading the People" seem

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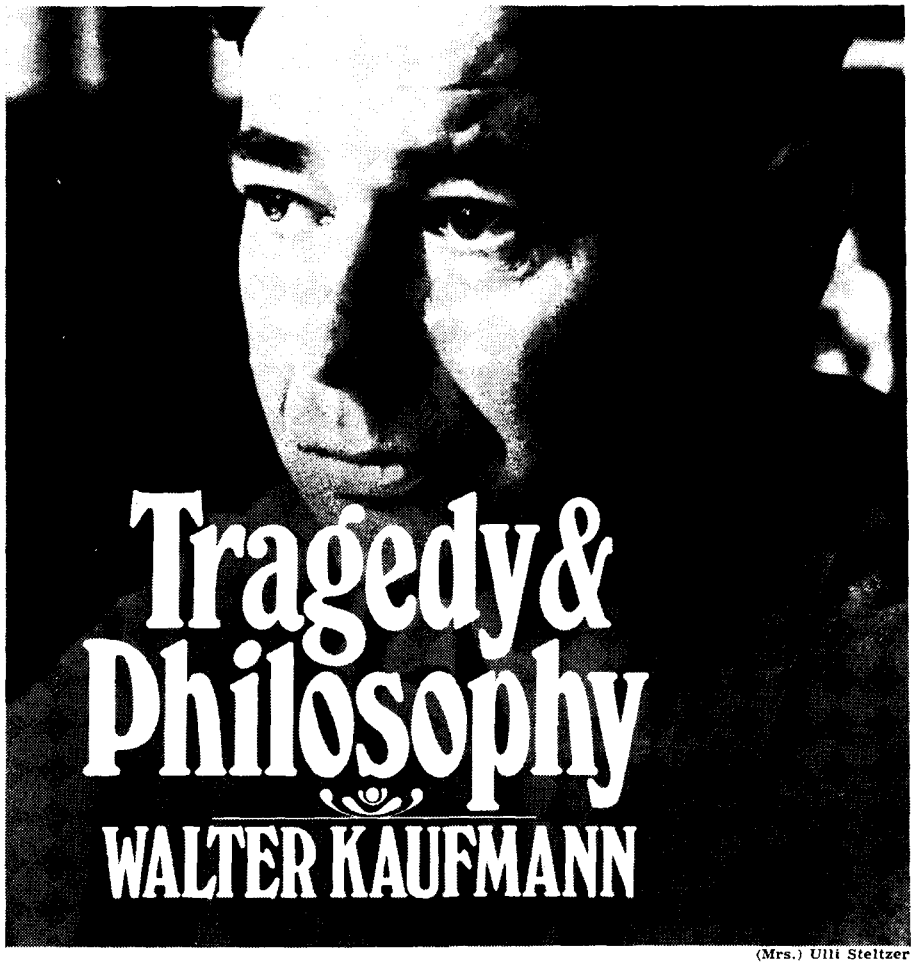

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rhetorical, one whose laundresses hauling their heavy, dripping burdens up from the Seine are sisters to Michelangelo's figures in the New Sacristy.

Daumier was an artist of great power in prints, paintings and sculpture. It is high time he was forgiven for the unfortunate handicap of being also a shrewd and articulate observer of the social and political scene.

Visions and Nightmares

OPIUM AND THE ROMANTIC IMAGINATION. *By Alethea Hayter. University of California Press. $7.50.*

Reviewed by GABRIEL GERSH

This scholarly and absorbing book sets out to assess the contribution, if any, made by the experience of opium to the work of some nineteenth-century writers, particularly Crabbe, Coleridge, De Quincey, Keats, Poe, Baudelaire, Wilkie Collins and Francis Thompson. As the author rather ruefully recognizes, the book has a topicality now that it lacked when she began it six years ago.

Opium—or laudanum, which is a tincture of opium and a very powerful drug—was not the nineteenth-century counterpart of many modern drugs since opium was valued not as a stimulant but as a sedative. The opium poppy has been cultivated in the Middle East for medical use since ancient times, and by the beginning of the seventeenth century its properties were known throughout Western Europe. From then until the Victorian period opiates were prescribed by doctors in the form of laudanum.

This drug served many purposes, the most important of which was to deaden pain. Yet not only was it administered to the poor under the guise of popular patent medicines for illnesses as various as hay fever, toothache, tuberculosis and the common cold, but it was taken by respectable people as a tranquilizer. Jane Austen's mother was ordered by an apothecary to "take 12 drops when she went to bed as a composer."

Although the addictive qualities of opium had been recognized by 1700, many medical authorities could see no real harm in it, and it was not until the appearance of De Quincey's *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* that addiction began to be seriously studied as a social and psychological problem. Yet, paradoxically, it was also De Quincey who launched the romantic cult of opium, with the result that many began to indulge in it. De Quincey composed a prayer to "just, subtle and mighty opium," repeatedly spoke of his martyrdom and developed a series of religious metaphors for addiction, a practice that, as Miss Hayter says, many other addicts have followed too willingly to dramatize themselves as celebrants of the mystery.

Why did certain great Romantics take seriously to the drug? Impossible as Romanticism is to define, it was bound up with passionate self-revelation and self-assertion, and it focused attention on the analysis of mental processes, especially the nature of imagination and the image-making, emotion-charged propensities of the dream. Dreams were believed to embody reality, to hint at "unknown modes of being" and to share a curious affinity with the creative act itself. To induce them, Mrs. Radcliffe gobbled her food in the hope of promoting a fertile indigestion, and Southey dissolved into giggles under the influence of nitrous oxide.

Miss Hayter believes that opium first induces a sensation of floating euphoria, "like plunging into a bath of tepid milk," but that soon the artificial paradises wear off, to be succeeded by agonizing withdrawal symptoms and descent into nightmare. Shelley began to imbibe laudanum as a specific against bouts of headache, but some of the nightmares and visions that troubled him—as when he encountered his *Doppelgänger,* thought that he beheld the ghost of Byron's child rising naked from the waves, or imagined that he saw "eyes instead of nipples"

GABRIEL GERSH, professor of English at Long Island University, is a regular contributor to publications here and abroad.

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set in Mary Shelley's breasts—were no doubt colored by the use of opium.

How did opium influence the content of what these Romantics wrote? Some critics have said that it made no difference at all, others that one can trace in their work a unique, drug-induced world with its own characteristic imagery. The exaggerations of the writers under the spell of opium make it difficult for the author to sort out the truth, and much of her book is a scrupulous examination of confusing evidence. She decides that opium neither promotes nor inhibits literary output. Although the drug may appear to provide a key to unknown regions of the individual's consciousness, it discloses nothing that is not already there. It may sometimes release an artist's hidden gifts, but these are still governed by his limitations. When Baudelaire and Gautier experimented with hashish, they saw scenes of wild unearthly beauty; but their acquaintance, the undistinguished artist Meissonier, found himself wandering amid the geometric parterres of a prosy formal garden.

The content of opium dreams, as revealed in literature, shows a remarkable consistency. A recurring element is what Miss Hayter calls "the peculiar horror of a limitless but yet enclosed space," and it is found in Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher," in De Quincey's works and, in its own way, in Coleridge's "Kubla Khan." Other recurring images depict the addicts as being embraced by coiling snakes, trampled on by monsters, thrust over precipices by tortoises or fiery dragons. Wilkie Collins succumbed to a waking hallucination in which a green woman with tusk-like teeth waited to say good night to him by biting his shoulder.

The master image of the opium addict is the prisoner in a vast Temple of the Pariahs. The jacket of Miss Hayter's book reproduces an engraving of an Imaginary Prison by the Italian artist Piranesi. Both Coleridge and De Quincey testify that the Piranesi engravings were the closest equivalent to their opium visions.

To speak of the heightened consciousness of those influenced by opium is imprecise because it is quite impossible to generalize about the effects of the drug. Miss Hayter realizes the many dangers of generalizing about a subject of such complexity. Her book is valuable, however, not because of any central, unifying thesis but because of a series of case studies, all of them well-written and some of them quite illuminating. Besides, it has the merit of being very broad in its sweep: the topics touched on in passing range from Clive of India to *Edwin Drood,* from the Parisian *Club des Haschischins* to Dürer's *Melencolia.*

Very impressive is the postscript in which Miss Hayter projects herself into the condition of the addict. She tells us that she could not become one because she cannot forget the voices of the opium artists crying out in their nightmares; she remembers Coleridge's terrible lament for the decay of his powers in his Dejection ode. No curiosity or wish to enlarge and intensify ordinary experience could impel her to enter a world of such wretchedness.

A Tortuous Path

THE JAPANESE COMMUNIST PARTY 1922-1945. *By George M. Beckmann and Okubo Genji. Stanford University Press. $12.50.*

Reviewed by NORMAN J. GALLO

It is interesting to learn that socialism was introduced into Japan primarily by Japanese individuals who were also Christians. Christian intellectuals founded one of the most influential socialist organizations in 1898, the Society for the Study of Socialism (*Shakaishugi Kenkyukai*). Although the authors do not raise the comparison, it can be logically argued that communism failed to take root in Japan for the same reasons that explain why Chris-

NORMAN J. GALLO taught English while living in Japan for two years. He is now a librarian for Carmichael Public Library in California, and his reviews have appeared in the *Nation* and the *New Republic.*

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tianity has never succeeded there—its identification by the Japanese people as a "foreign" creed subservient to foreign forces in other countries and thus its failure to fit into the conventional value pattern of Japanese society. The authors are unequivocal, though, in connecting this factor to communism's failure in prewar Japan.

This absorbing study of the Japanese Communist Party during the crisis-laden years of 1922-1945 provides a penetrating insight into the continuous conflicts and factionalism that prevented the party from becoming a significant political force. As the authors state:

> There were three major cycles in the life of the party in the period down to 1945: (1) the first communist group and party from 1921 to 1924, (2) the second group and party from 1925 to 1929, and (3) the third group and party from 1930 to 1932. After 1932, the communist movement can no longer be considered a movement led by an organized, political party; its subsequent history centers around small groups of communists, rarely united and often in conflict with each other.

Marxism itself did not take hold in Japan until after the Russian Revolution had occurred. It then replaced anarcho-syndicalism as an ideology in Japanese political thought. The organization known as the Japanese Communist Party did not come into formal existence until July 15, 1922, and vigorous and continuous suppression by the government forced it to dissolve in March, 1924. Another factor that contributed to the disbandment of the party was the decision by the Japanese government to support necessary legislation to obtain universal male suffrage. This policy of the "whip" with "candy" helped to weaken seriously support for the communists.

Yet revealing the resiliency of the party and its ability to maintain a continuity despite the most adverse circumstances, the Japanese Communist Party was reestablished in December, 1926. Almost immediately, dissension once again broke out over what ideology should guide the party. It was the continuous combination of brutal suppression by the police power of the government from without and the constant dissension from within that ultimately led to the party's final dissolution as an organized political force in 1932.

The Comintern (the Communist International), by trying to determine and make policy for the Japanese Communist Party, played a major role in contributing to its downfall. Its failure to recognize the uniqueness of Japanese historical and societal development caused it to make serious mistakes in establishing policy for the party. The enormity of this miscalculation did not become apparent until the defection of some of the Japanese party leaders in 1933. Two of the leaders, Sano and Nabeyama, stated that "the Comintern did not sufficiently understand that 'the form of revolution will vary according to factors peculiar to each country.' "

A portion of a memorandum they wrote said:

> The Comintern has very little understanding of the historical traditions, peculiarities of social life, and psychological features of the Japanese nation. It cannot understand them. It has steered Japan toward a theory of class struggle based on European experience, not on Japanese peculiarities.

With prophetic insight, they predicted:

> We believe that it is only a matter of time before the comrades in the Chinese soviet government and the Chinese Communist Party agree with us regarding the sectarian and bureaucratic nature of the Comintern, as well as its transformation into an agency of the Soviet state. With the outbreak of a world war, the Comintern will collapse completely.

Despite lack of popular support, bitter internal dissension and imprisonment or defection of all its leaders with the exception of Nosaka Sanzo, the Japanese Communist Party was reestablished as a legal political organization under the American Occupation in 1945. The party went underground when the Korean War broke out and reemerged in 1955. Both the Korean War and the Occupation were over, and it was allowed to take part openly once more in political activities.

Yet even today, over a decade since its reemergence, the Japanese Communist

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Party cannot be considered a major political force. In the latest election in January, 1967, for the House of Representatives (the Diet's lower house whose function is to choose the government), it was able to elect only five candidates to office. The Komeito Party of the militant Buddhist organization, *Soka Gakkai,* was able to elect twenty-five of its candidates, and this was its first entry into the political race for the lower house. It is clear that the majority of the electorate still view the Communists with suspicion.

The authors have done extensive research in tracing the violent, erratic and tortuous path followed by the party during the eventful years between the two world wars. Their work is well documented, and they have succeeded in accurately portraying what occurred when Marxism tried to take root in prewar Japan, and explaining why, embodied in the Japanese communist movement, it failed to do so.

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The Reader Replies

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles that have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20009. Because of space limitations we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*
—EDITOR

Joseph Wood Krutch, in the Winter issue of the SCHOLAR, has given us an example of the kind of set-piece that does not help to resolve strife between the two cultures, of which we have already had too much.

He cannot fairly claim that there are, in fact, "unbridled pretensions of science and technology" that need to be demolished. Nor do scientists claim that "science is the only source of truth and wisdom," nor do they contend that "it alone should determine the future of mankind."

He cites alleged scientific disagreements between Linus Pauling and Edward Teller with regard to the implications of fallout from nuclear testing. In fact, they are in essential agreement about the physical-chemical, scientific facts involved. They differ with regard to the moral and political questions: the conclusions they draw from these facts with regard to the proper conduct of humanity. Krutch could easily inform himself on the scientific facts to the extent that they are known (this is a fringe area where knowledge is admittedly incomplete): what has *he* to say on the implications for right conduct to which these facts lead?

He says, "When we are told that we should accept the general proposition that scientific opinion alone should determine law and policy . . ." But nobody is telling us that.

Surely he would agree that where scientific facts are involved in a question of public policy, those facts should be taken into account in making policy. Where answers are not available, steps to improve scientific knowledge should be taken; if necessary, tentative interim judgments can be made until the needed additional knowledge is gained.

If Francis Crick said, as Krutch says he did, that there is no qualitative difference between living and nonliving matter, Crick can only mean that as far as his knowledge goes he has not been able clearly to recognize such a difference. This is a quite different statement. The truth or falsity of the statement cannot be assessed without an explicit statement of the meaning assigned to the word "qualitative" in this context.

If Darwin was wrong on the matter of inheritance of acquired characteristics, that is only one of many examples that can be given of initial errors in science being subsequently corrected. Euclid was "wrong" on his fifth postulate, and thereby failed to discover non-Euclidean geometry.

These examples indicate what Walter Roberts was saying about science correcting its own errors; he did not say that science never makes errors. Roberts says that correction occurs "inexorably" which I am inclined to think is true. This says nothing about how quickly the necessary correction is achieved. Sometimes this takes a long time. Anyway we know of no better process to arrive at the truth in scientific matters.

Now we come to the issue of social responsibility for the misuse of science by society. All citizens have a responsibility to minimize the misuse. Scientists have a special responsibility where they have a greater familiarity with the facts of the situation. But in no sense do scientists have a sole responsibility: all citizens, including humanists, have such a responsibility as well.

Krutch speaks of the dangers of "putting poison and firearms where children can reach them . . ." If we are still talking about the military misuse of nuclear energy, then the children in question were our national leaders during World War II. The record shows clearly that many atomic scientists went to great lengths to warn these "children" what terrible dangers for the human race were being unleashed.

He writes, "As the technological possibilities created by scientific advance become more and more terrifying [is he referring to health science, food production or what?] it becomes increasingly clear that there is not enough hu-

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man intelligence [among the humanists or politicians?] foresight, or good will to cope with the new dangers."

Most knowledge can be put to some use. Some uses are good, some are evil. Usually it cannot be foreseen which knowledge could have which kind of use. Often both kinds of uses are inextricably intertwined.

Ought we to forego addition of knowledge to our store because of fear that men are so stupid that they will necessarily make bad uses of what they know? Or can the humanists join hands with the scientists in responsibly helping mankind to elevate its moral sights to accept good uses and reject bad ones?

EDWARD UHLER CONDON
Professor of Physics
University of Colorado

* * *

MR. KRUTCH replies: If there are no unbridled pretenses of science and technology, then what is Professor René Dubos of the Rockefeller University warning us against? Or is he just a layman like me and writing "a set piece" that will serve no purpose?

* * *

I appreciate your printing the regular column by Joseph Wood Krutch. His penetrating analysis of the current scene is a needed service.

CHESTER POGORZELSKI
Harrison, New Jersey

* * *

I would like to say that Joseph Wood Krutch's "If You Don't Mind My Saying So" has been a joy to me for some years now.

R. GORDON HOLCOMBE, M.D
Lake Charles, Louisiana

* * *

I felt Kenneth Keniston's article, "Heads and Seekers: Drugs on Campus, Counter-Cultures and American Society," in the Winter issue was one of the most thoughtful and enlightening articles on students that I have read in a long time, and because this kind of analysis is so helpful to us in our work, I would like to request reprints of the article.

BARBARA COLLINS
Barnard College
New York

* * *

Kenneth Keniston's report was a tremendous revelation to me, and I should like many of my friends with growing children to read it. Please let me know if reprints of this article may be purchased.

FLORENCE SHOMER
Brooklyn, New York

* * *

William Jovanovich ["The American Textbook," AS: Spring, 1969] fails to expose an intrinsic potential danger in the increased use of standardized textbooks throughout the country. Textbook series under a general editorship, employing the services of contracted authors, control in a significant way the content of material presented and the opinions that can be inferred by their presentation. This mass control of information, under the control of so few, is especially worthy of concern in the area of political science. Political science by virtue of its subject matter, conflict of ideology, must be treated with care, to insure that all views are considered. It is true that nationwide standardization of textbooks has furthered the quality of education in America. This development has maximized the obligations of educators to present all sides of an issue.

DAVID COLLEGEMAN
Indiana University
Indiana, Pennsylvania

* * *

This letter is in reply to no article or issue of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR in particular, but to the idea of the journal in general. My aspiration to become a "professional" scholar in America is often dampened by "professional" material that abounds in quantity, but is sorely deficient in quality. This is particularly true of my own discipline, political science. The trend toward specialization—doing-one's-thing, if you like—tragically compromises in many instances those old but admirable ideals of originality, insight and, most important, intellectual beauty. The one thing I have always been led to believe is the hallmark of contemporary scholarship—human sensitivity—seems to have lost favor in face of the demand for methodological precision.

Except in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR. No professional journal provides me with so much pleasure and so much *hope*. The quality of your articles is never compromised, whether I agree or disagree with their themes and ideas. I don't mean to bore you with excessive flattery, or, on the other hand, to titillate you with it. I simply place in the record my recognition of your satisfying achievements. If only for the

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sake of us fledglings who have not reached the end of the maze, keep it up.

DAVID MENNINGER
University of California
Riverside

* * *

Mr. Harvey Gross ["Reopening the Case of Wagner," AS: Winter, 1968-69] says that *Die Meistersinger* "alternates between elaborate stage ritual and soliloquy—scarcely the ingredients of compelling dramatic interaction" and that "so much of the music is insipidly sentimental . . . that its dramatic interest is blunted and dissipated."

But its real dramatic interest stems, of course, from its vivid account of the conflict between feeling and form. In the first act, form loses out as Walther's spring song shows up the pretentiousness of the mastersingers' rules. In the second act feeling comes to grief as midsummer madness leads to the majestic stage-wide brawl. But in the third act Walther learns that he can keep his creative spontaneity, and at the same time make use of the discipline that the experience of the older musicians offers. By the time he reaches the second stanza of the prize song the whole assembly chimes in with him, suggesting that such a synthesis strikes a universal note.

I can't feel that "the action is typically impeded by the clichés of Grand Opera: detachable arias, ensemble numbers, a ballet . . ." Walther's solos (few in number) aren't detachable. "Am Stillen Herd" appeals to Walther von der Vogenweide and tradition, also to the influence of physical nature on the singer. "Lenzes Gebot," rising higher and higher, shows the impossibility of confining the creative impulse to rules learned by rote. The ballet of the apprentices, with its angular rhythms, indicates what the apprentice mind, immature as it must be, does with the most graceful and fluid of all meters—the waltz. In addition to the gorgeous melodies there are delightful allusions —to Nikolai's music when Sachs talks about the days of his youth, to Tristan when he mentions King Mark. The night watchman's horn is half a tone off key, expressing his innocence of all that goes on and his remoteness from what has actually happened. And, of course, the Prelude is certainly one of the most majestic pieces of polyphony ever written. Wasn't it Paderewski who called *Meistersinger* the greatest work of art ever conceived? Certainly many who have a right to judge have put it way up at the top.

About two thirds of the way through the Prelude, marked "J" on the score, the treble instruments have a theme from Walther, while the middle and bass registers give us two of the

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main mastersinger themes. At this point the orchestra must maintain an exact beat if the whole thing is not to fall to pieces. The suggestion is, it seems to me, that if we can blend the fresh insights of youth with the experience of age we shall achieve a much needed mastery of the rhythm of life. It is a suggestion so pertinent to our present problems that we ought not to miss it, or let our dislike for Wagner as a person make us blind to it. With much of the censure of Wagner in Mr. Gross's article one can only agree. But—let's face it: *Meistersinger* is different. It is true, alas, that Hitler liked it. But even the Devil can quote Scripture.

J. S. Bixler
Jeffrey, New Hampshire

* * *

As a former Quincy native and admirer of the Adams family I was particularly interested in Peter Shaw's article in the Winter issue, "The Apprenticeship of Charles Francis Adams." I felt that I had gained real insight into the problems, delights and challenges of growing into "Adamhood." One section of it I would like to question—where he refers to Penn's Hill, Merry Mount and Mt. Wollaston. These names are all a familiar part of Quincy lore and very early in our school careers we learned the stories connected with these sites, such as the association of the Adams family with Penn's Hill where now a cairn atop that hill marks the place where Abigail and her son, John Quincy, watched the battle of Bunker Hill. That spot and Merry Mount, however, are two quite distinct places and neither one is or ever has been Mt. Wollaston. That was the name given to the settlement, now known as Quincy, where Captain Wollaston and his followers, among them Thomas Morton, established a trading post at Black's Creek. It was this post that was called Merry Mount and it was here that Morton conducted his famous maypole revelries that so upset the Plymouth Pilgrims. Black's Creek and the Merry Mount district are near the Adams mansion but Penn's Hill is several miles to the south and is adjacent to the two farm houses that were the birthplaces of John Adams and John Quincy Adams.

Please believe me; I am not engaged in nit-picking. I just thought that you might be interested in this bit of Quincy history. Charles Francis Adams' son, Charles Francis, must have been fascinated by the Merry Mount story, for he added his own notes to the reprinting of Thomas Morton's book, *New English Canaan.*

Ethel Pierce Zaeder
Erie, Pennsylvania

Robert K. Merton's article, "Behavior Patterns of Scientists," in the Spring issue, was cogent and informative. He does, however, overlook a point that I think ought to be considered.

Mr. Merton concluded that, since past scientists can be shown to have acted in an ambitious and competitive manner, "exposés" like *The Double Helix* do not reflect any revolutionary changes in the behavior patterns of scientists generally. This conclusion is not entirely acceptable, for it fails to consider the necessary historical distinction between how scientists actually behaved and the varying ways they viewed their own behavior.

When the self-images of nineteenth and twentieth-century scientists are compared this distinction becomes very sharp. In the nineteenth century scientists did not consider themselves ambitious and competitive men. On the contrary, they rejected ambition as an unworthy source of motivation and insisted that science was a community that depended upon the cooperation of its initiates for its success. They may have been ambitious and competitive, but they rarely saw themselves as such. When they did, as Mr. Merton's data suggests, they felt guilty about it.

James Watson's book reflects an entirely different spirit, one that he shares, as Mr. Merton indicates, with a great number of contemporary scientists. Most of them frankly admit to being both ambitious and competitive, and some of them, for example, Watson, give every appearance of reveling in the atmosphere thus created.

It seems to me that a shift within the scientific community from an attitude of conscious (if false) humility and cooperativeness to an attitude of conspicuous ambition and competitiveness constitutes a genuine revolution in at least one aspect of the behavior patterns of scientists. Moreover, the change involved is of considerable importance, since what a man thinks he is doing is every bit as important to an accurate historical description of his actions as what later researchers will decide he was doing in actual fact. Finally, a revolution in the self-images of scientists could conceivably have profound psychological consequences for them. The relish with which Watson describes his pursuit of fame and fortune may disappoint scientific hero-worshipers, but it might also serve as a very wholesome release from the repressive straight-jacket of nineteenth-century scientific moralism.

Robert Artigiani
Wisconsin State University

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